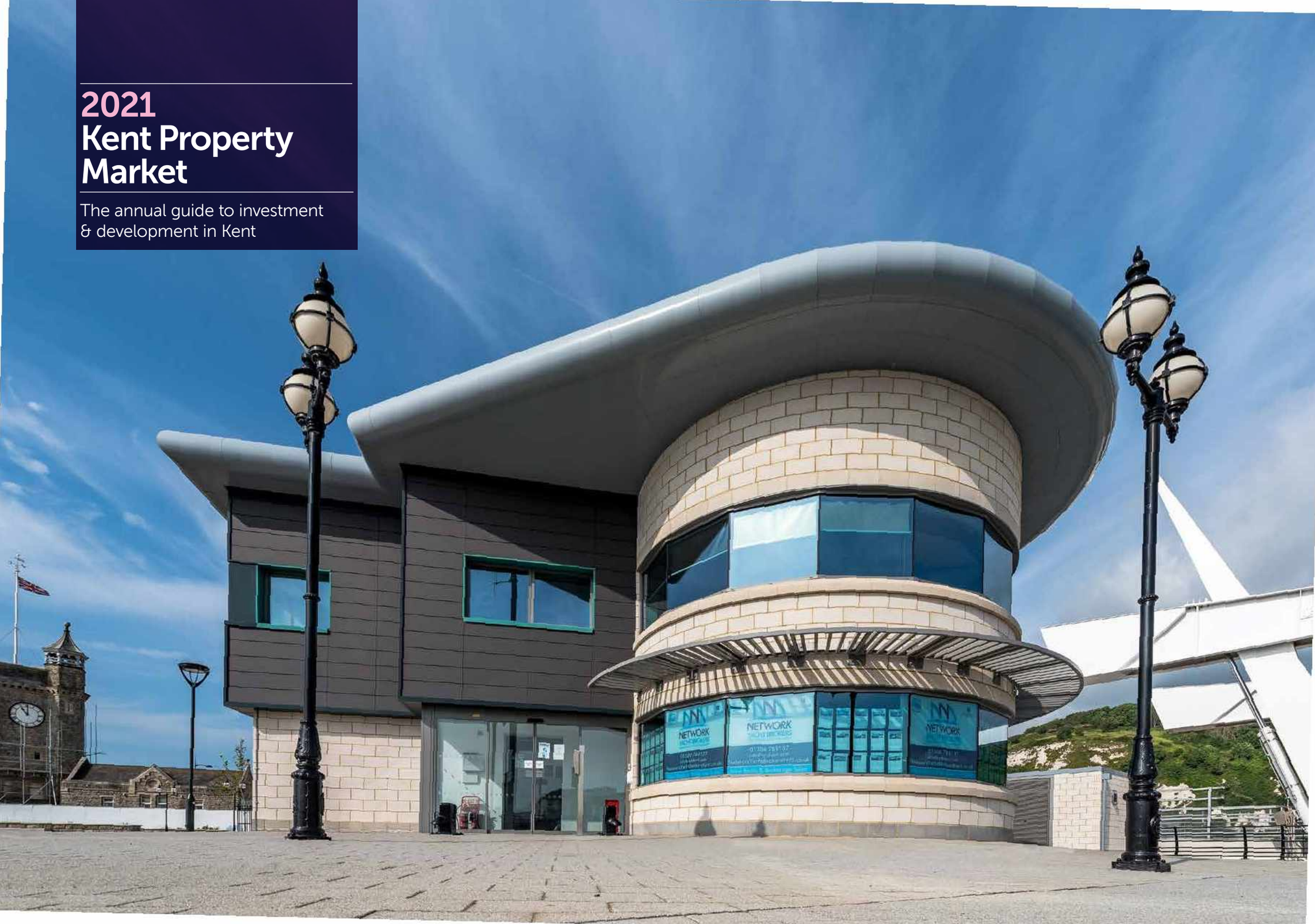
2021 Kent Property Market

The annual guide to investment & development in Kent



Contents

Cover:
As part of the approximately £250m Dover Western Docks Revival (DWDR) the Marina and Office regulates access to the new 250 berth marina, controls the new bascule bridge to the listed Wellington Dock in addition to monitoring the access roads in that part of the port.
CREDIT: Gordon Young, HMY Architects

03
Welcome
An introduction to the 30th edition of the Kent Property Market Report, produced by Kent County Council's Economic Development Division, Caxtons and Locate in Kent.

Caxtons' Property Market Analysis

04
Caxtons' Property Market Outlook
While the pandemic continues to overshadow life and the economy, the last year has demonstrated property can be part of the solution for Kent's future. The county has attracted new businesses and investment in many of the UK's fastest growing sectors.

06
Science and Business Park Performance
The county's science parks have seen a particularly active year. The specialist nature of lab and high-tech operations sustained park occupation levels throughout the lockdown period, while Kent's accessible and relatively affordable business park space has supported demand.

08
Office Performance
The uncertainty in the city centre office market seen across the UK has taken its toll on activity in Kent over the last 12 months with low levels of lettings. Longer term there are opportunities for the county's town centre markets brought about by more flexible working practices.

10
Industrial and Distribution Performance
Following 2020's record level of industrial and logistics take up across the South East, 2021 has delivered another strong year of activity with lettings including significant new space by Ikea and Amazon. Rents have reached new highs further boosting investor demand in the county.

14
Retail Performance
In common with the rest of the UK, the Kent retail and leisure sectors have continued to experience a challenging period. The adjustment in rents will facilitate lettings over the medium term, but there will be a need for a longer term vision in order to deliver a sustainable and vibrant future.

18
Rural Performance
Following a slow start to the farmland market, average values across the South East remain at the upper end of those across all regions of the UK. The full implications of changes to the funding regime following Brexit will take time, but supply shortages will support values.

22
Residential Performance
Kent has maintained its appeal, driving price growth ahead of the South East average. The pace of activity has brought forward some construction activity and phased schemes, and as a result, housebuilders are seeking to replenish landbanks across the county.

10
Crossways Commercial Park, Dartford.
CREDIT: Goodman

18
Proposal for Manor Farm Estate, Wateringbury, near Maidstone.
CREDIT: Taylor Hare Architects

Locate in Kent Commentary

24
Inward Investment
The official investment promotion agency for Kent and Medway reviews recent market trends and highlights notable investment projects in the county.

24
Proposal for the boulevard at Innovation Park, Medway.
CREDIT: Project Centre/Medway Council

50
Proposal for Jasmin Vardimon Dance Academy, Ashford.
CREDIT: KCC

Kent County Council, Medway Council & Kent's District Council Commentary

26
Leisure and Tourism Performance
Visit Kent review the year and recent investments as well as the impact on the sector from the pandemic.

28
Infrastructure and Regeneration
Kent County Council, Medway Council and Kent's District Councils' commentary on investment in infrastructure and regeneration projects.

60
Green Infrastructure
An exemplar project in east Kent highlighting investment in a sustainable urban drainage system.

26
The postponed 149th Open at Royal St. George's Golf Club, Sandwich, welcomed 32,000 spectators.
CREDIT: Royal St. Georges Golf Club

30
Proposal for Albion Waterside, Gravesend.
CREDIT: JTP Architects

Contributory Sponsors' Articles

62
Cripps Pemberton Greenish

64
DHA Planning

66
Hollaway

68
MHA McIntyre Hudson

70
RICS

Strategic Developments, Contacts and Acknowledgements

72
Strategic Developments
Location map and list of developments by use class across Kent and Medway with contact and website information.

75
Contact details

76
Acknowledgements

Welcome

Welcome to the 30th Edition of the Kent Property Market Report.

The report is produced by Kent County Council, Caxtons and Locate in Kent.

The **Caxtons Property Market Analysis** reviews property deals and activity during 2020-21 and covers:

- **Business Parks**
- **Offices**
- **Industrial & Distribution**
- **Rural (courtesy of Savills)**
- **Retail**
- **Residential**

An update on **Inward Investment** and future opportunities is provided by **Locate in Kent**.

In **Leisure and Tourism** Visit Kent review the year and recent investments as well as the impact on the sector from the pandemic.

The **Infrastructure and Regeneration** section features current and planned developments. It focusses on Kent's growth areas, the continuing regeneration of Kent's coastal towns and rural communities, housing initiatives as well as significant investment in road and rail infrastructure.

Green Infrastructure highlights projects that support sustainable development.

The **Strategic Developments** pages feature a comprehensive list of sites, useful contact details and a location map.

The full report can also be found at **www.kentpropertymarket.com.**

Caxtons Chartered Surveyors, established in 1990, is one of the largest independent property practices in the South East offering a full range of agency, management, professional and surveying services across all property sectors.

Kent County Council's Economic Development Division works with public, private and voluntary sectors to support economic growth by encouraging and supporting businesses; working closely with specific sectors to promote growth and finding ways to fund business critical infrastructure and unlocking key development sites.

Locate in Kent provides a comprehensive, confidential and free business relocation and advisory service for all companies looking to relocate to or expand in Kent and Medway.

The producers of the report thank sponsors and contributors to the report:

- **Cripps Pemberton Greenish**
- **DHA Planning**
- **Hollaway**
- **MHA MacIntyre Hudson**
- **Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors**

We hope you find the report useful and informative.

Derek Murphy
Cabinet Member for Economic Development,
Kent County Council

Ron Roser
Chairman, Caxtons

Gavin Cleary
Chief Executive, Locate in Kent Ltd

Left: Rochester Riverside.
CREDIT: Countryside/Andrew Hendry

Caxtons' Property Market Outlook

While only 18 months have elapsed since the start of the pandemic, the crisis has dictated the property market since its arrival in the UK. The acceleration of structural changes already underway has redefined sectors and market expectations, with some surprising outcomes, in particular in the residential market. With the benefit of another year, a picture of the future landscape is starting to form, but is by no means clear.

The Kent property market has largely mirrored the national picture, but with its own unique overlay. Relatively affordable housing, a varied landscape, open space and beaches have drawn new residents and visitors alike. The experience of each town across the county has differed but the crisis has focused minds on the future aspirations. This vision will be essential as we collectively recover.

Current expectations suggest the UK economy will have returned to pre-pandemic levels by the end of 2021. Clearly, this bounce back masks an incredibly challenging period which will have social and economic implications for some time to come. However, the outlook does appear more positive than this time last year.

Nationally the Investment Property Forum (IPF) Survey of Independent Forecasts suggests the total return from property will reach 6.9% in 2021, a marked improvement on the previous year when returns were in negative territory. This uplift in performance is driven in large part by an uptick in expectations for capital value growth as investors' concerns about the property market ease a little, albeit with significant variations across the sectors.

Rents, on average, are expected to keep falling, with the retail sector remaining the largest contributor to the decline. The industrial sector has bucked the market trend throughout the pandemic and continues to do so with expectations, at a UK level, of robust rental growth over the next four years.

Certainly, the Kent distribution market has again performed well with significant lettings on the new stock coming forward. Intense levels of activity seen over recent years had driven a sharp uptick in rental growth, narrowing the margin somewhat with other outer M25 locations. However, the county remains relatively affordable, particularly given the links to the EU which remain vital to distribution networks. Over the last 12 months rents have continued to rise and as retailers and distribution operators await schemes being brought forward, further pressure on rents is likely. This potential has driven growing institutional investor interest in Kent's industrial and distribution market.

Kent's business and science park market has remained active over the last 12 months, with both new lettings and renewals recorded. This has kept rents stable across the county's parks. Locations such as Discovery Park, Kent Science Park and Kent Medical Campus have benefited from a strong interest in the life science sector. However the traditional business park markets have also retained tenants and in some cases secured new lettings, with companies in the professional and business services sector combining with a burgeoning technology market. Parking and a greater control of office environments have remained attractive to many tenants and businesses seeking new or expansion space will again find limited options over the coming year. Positively however, the medium term will see new stock coming through.

The low pace of lettings seen across Kent's town centre office market have perpetuated in 2021. While some workers are returning to their offices, many companies are taking a wait and see approach, reviewing their longer term occupational strategies. The county's serviced office and

6.9%

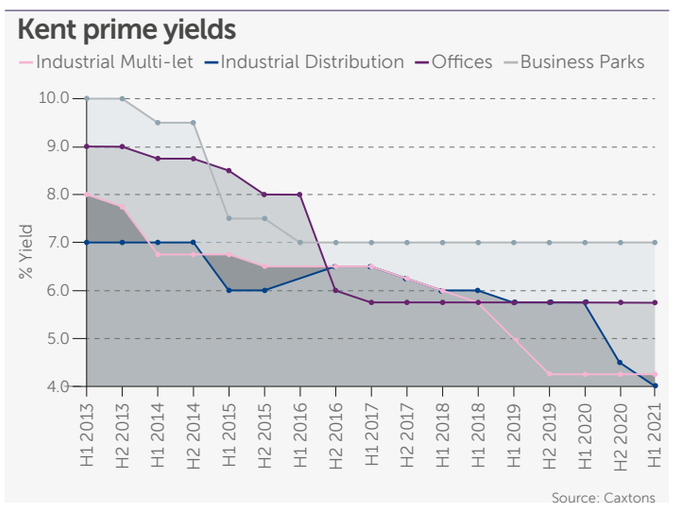
UK property total return forecast for 2021
Source: IPF Survey of Independent Forecasts for UK Commercial Property, September 2021

CREDIT: TAVIS HOUSE/BARWOOD CAPITAL

Trilogy, Sittingbourne.

4%

Intense demand pushes prime yield for Kent multi let industrial assets to historic low

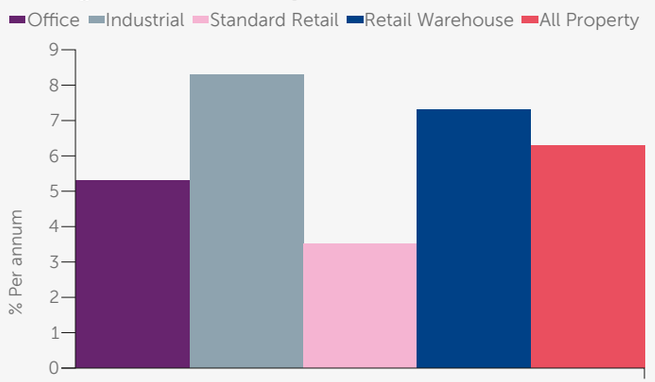


co-working providers have benefited from this uncertainty, delivering the flexible high quality space in demand by a range of businesses. It is possible less floorspace will be required longer term, but quality will remain important. There are concerns over the loss of larger floorplate stock to residential use. Fortunately some of the county's regeneration schemes will provide some limited grade A buildings which will be essential for attracting and retaining businesses in the high value knowledge industries.

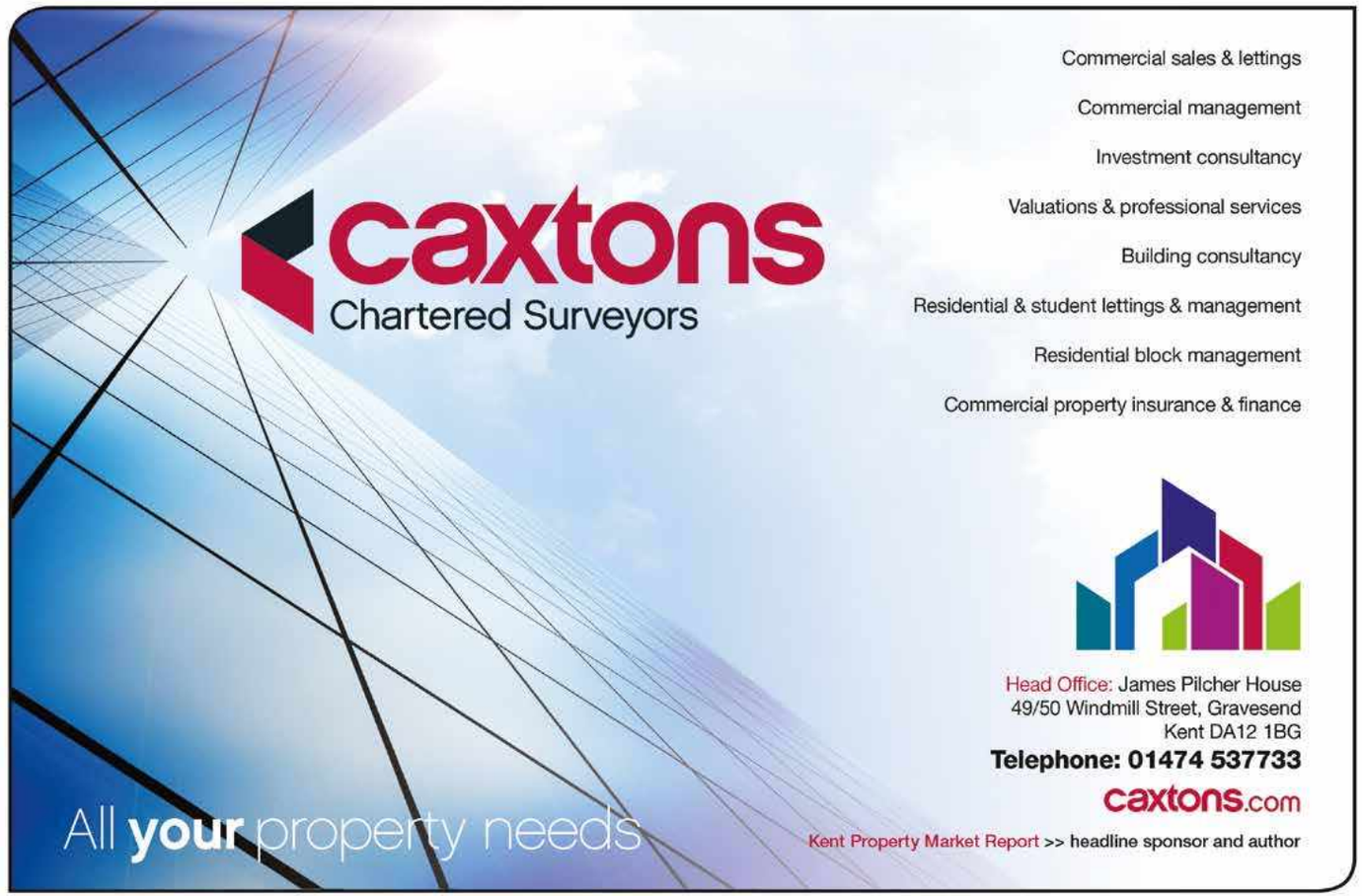
The retail sector continues to struggle, with high street vacancy rates remaining elevated across the county. As the dust settles from the pandemic, the true scale of the structural change that has occurred since spring 2020 will become clear. Kent's towns have seen mixed fortunes. While rents are down across the board, new lettings have occurred and greater vibrancy is evident in some commuter towns. The retail warehouse sector has seen less impact from the pandemic crisis and the IPF Consensus Forecasts show a marked increase in rental growth expectations for the sector when compared with this time last year.

As reported nationwide, the pandemic has had a positive but unexpected impact on the residential market. On average, prices in Kent rose by close to 6% by the end of the second quarter, well ahead of 2020. This growth has narrowed the disparity in values with the rest of the South East. Nonetheless the county remains, on average, a relatively more affordable

UK Total Return IPF Consensus Forecasts, average over 2021/25 period



Source: Investment Property Forum Survey of Independent Forecasts for UK Commercial Property, September 2021. Forecasts derived from 23 leading fund/investment management houses and consultancies



location in the home counties. Increased demand as households sought space and gardens has depleted supplies of new homes, spurring housebuilders to bring forward construction timetables and replenish landbanks.

The property investment market has remained relatively thin although deals have been achieved across all the sectors. Overall, the Caxtons' Prime Yield Series shows a stable picture despite the uncertainty of the last 12 months. The exception to this pattern is the industrial market, where intense investor demand, reflected in the Kent market, has driven down yields further over the last year.

Given greater pricing stability and the prospect of rental growth in some markets, the IPF Survey of Independent Forecasts suggests total returns to investors on a UK wide basis will average 6.3% over the period 2021/25. This is twice that projected at this time last year, a clear reflection of the turnaround in expectations.

We are not out of the woods, but in the 2020 report we argued that property can be part of the solution for the future in Kent. If we look to some of the successes over the last 12 months, whether in the public or private realm, this point is evidently true. New buildings, new companies, new homes and new outdoor space are all positive signals of a better future ahead.

Science and Business Parks Performance

A year on from our last report there is more concrete evidence on how businesses will take the experiences of the pandemic through to future business practices and working arrangements. It is now clear that homeworking to varying extents will become commonplace. Both businesses and workers will make decisions on how much of the office and commute they need or want. But survey evidence is pointing increasingly to the need for some form of communal working, to aid collaboration, creativity, training and underpin the culture of organisations.

Evidence from across Kent suggests hybrid home – office working arrangements appear most likely to dominate. Letting activity has returned following the highly disrupted 2020, with many of the county's science and business parks operating with few or no vacancies. As a result rents have remained stable supported by continued steady demand. While most parks' rents are unchanged, Eureka Park has seen an upturn following a few years of stability. This has fed through into a small increase in the average Kent prime science and business park rent over the last 12 months.

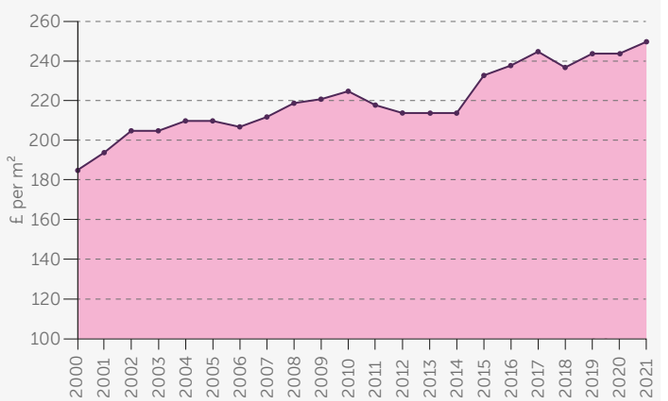
The county's science parks have seen a particularly active year. The specialist nature of lab and high tech operations sustained park occupation levels throughout the lockdown period and has minimised the space deliberations seen in other sectors. In addition, the challenges presented by the pandemic and growing investment funds available for science start-ups and grow-on companies is driving rapid growth. It is hoped the county's science and technology sectors will benefit further from the Government's new Innovation Strategy which will increase public investment in R&D to £22 billion a year.

Discovery Park has seen growth with the arrival of 36 new tenants since January 2021, 14 of them start-ups, and

2%

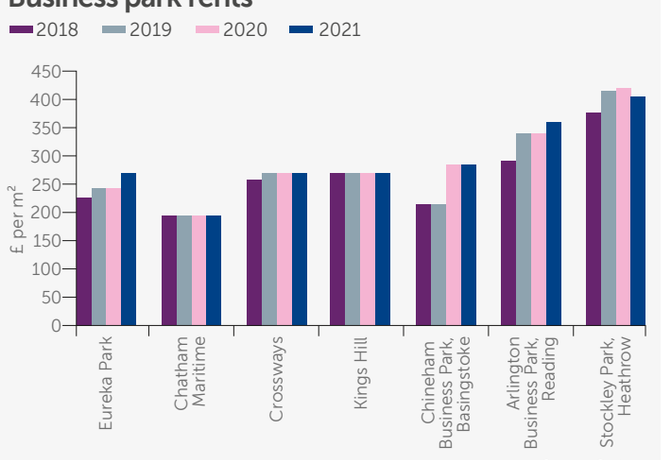
Average annual increase in the Kent prime business park rent over the last 3 years
Caxtons

Kent average prime business park rent



Source: Caxtons

Business park rents



Source: Caxtons

£250 per m²

Kent average prime business park rent reaches new historic high
Caxtons

forecasting there will be 40-45 new occupiers by end of year. More than 4,645m² (50,000ft²) net space has been let, including approx 929m² (10,000ft²) lab space, and there is strong demand for wet lab space from London based science companies. Construction will start this year on an incubator facility offering flexible laboratory, write up and office space for 20-25 businesses. The building will be delivered in 2022 and has been supported by the Government's Getting Building Fund.

Kent Science Park, which comprises laboratories and business accommodation across 47 buildings, has maintained a high level of occupancy over the last 12 months. There is an existing consent for three new buildings of 11,985m² (129,000ft²), but a planning application for a significant extension of the Park to provide an additional 170,000m² (1.8m ft²) of new floorspace creating 8,000 new jobs was submitted in July.

CREDIT: DISCOVERY PARK LTD

New office space, Discovery Park, Sandwich.

Lettings							
Date	**Location**	**Landlord**	**Tenant**	**Floorspace ft²**	**Rent (pa)**	**Lease term**	**Agent**
Nov '20	Crossways Point 15, Crossways Business Park, Dartford	CCLA	KT Heating	17,957	£23.00 psf	10 yrs	Altus
Jun '21	Rift House, Eureka Park, Ashford	Rift Ltd	E.D.F.	10,313	£221,000 plus premium	Balance of 7 year lease	Stafford Perkins
Feb '21	11, Tower View, Kings Hill	Kings Hill Unit Trust	Orbit Group	2,740 IPMS3	Confidential	Confidential	Altus, Knight Frank, Hanover Green

CREDIT: RICHARD BAILEY/C AND W ARCHITECTS

The Hub at Kent Science Park, Sittingbourne.

At Kent Medical Campus the new Innovation Centre is nearing completion, providing 3,437m² (37,000ft²) of workspace for SMEs in the life science, healthcare and med-tech sectors. The 30 acre campus, with current occupiers including KIMS and Cygnet Health Care, has the potential to develop up to 98,000m² (1,000,000 ft²) of floorspace.

Activity in Kings Hill over the last 12 months provides a positive indication of the intentions of businesses towards their future office requirements in the wake of the pandemic. By the end of July, the park had seen 1,205m² (12,978ft²) of transactions involving four tenants, with further space under offer following the easing of restrictions.

The agreed lettings include 255m² (2,740 ft²) at 11 Tower View to Orbit Group, 147m² (1,581ft²) at 35 Kings Hill A venue to AXA Insurance UK Plc, 495m² (5,307 ft²) in 2 Kings Hill Avenue to Teligent Ltd and 311ft² (3,350 ft²) in 30 Tower View to British Assessment Bureau. Watchfinder took a lease of 1,394m² (15,000ft²) in 25 KHA, a building outside the Kings Hill Unit Trust Portfolio, a welcome addition to the business park, along with Rolex. Kings Hill Unit Trust's newly refurbished 18 Kings Hill Avenue, providing 3,386m² (36,443ft²), has already attracted interest and at the time of going to print 1,050m² (11,300ft²) is under offer.

Operating with few voids there has been relatively little activity at Crossways Business Park, Dartford, following a number of small lettings absorbing vacant space in 2020. At Gillingham Business Park, available floorspace on the park remains limited.

Eureka Park, Ashford, which comprises over 27,871m² (300,000ft²) saw Bizspace take occupation of The Cobalt Building, following the completion of the purpose built property in February at 1600 Eureka Park. The space provides 73 offices ranging from 16-39m² (170-420ft²), with the potential to accommodate up to 250 employees. This has proved timely as companies review their occupational strategies. The Park has consent for a further 100,000m² (1.2m ft²) Grade A office space, with pre let opportunities of 1,858-4,645m² (20-50,000ft²) or outright plot sales.

At Eurocentre Business Park, Faversham, the 2,230m² (24,000ft²) Saphir House constructed by George Wilson Developments in 2010, was redeveloped following the failure of the tenant, Simply Scuba, during the lockdown period. The developer took back ownership of the property, creating two floors of office space with ground floor retail. The building completed in April and is fully let with ten tenants, including Screwfix, who have taken the 464m² (5,000ft²) ground floor.

Investment volumes have slowed further over the last 12 months, with Kent seeing no major science and business park transactions. Anchor Boulevard, comprising 1,386m² (14,916ft²) on Crossways Business Park, let to Westbury Homes until 2023, but sub let to three tenants, was bought for £3.1m (NIY 9.29%) in March by Craigard. The vendor was Aberdeen Standard.

Technology and life sciences have demonstrated resilience to the challenges presented by the pandemic and have come to the fore in the eyes of policymakers and investors alike. Looking ahead, it is likely these sectors will increasingly drive floorspace demand across the county's parks. Kent's affordability advantage will be important but attracting and retaining high skilled workers will be more so. This will rely on the overall package the county has to offer in terms of lifestyle and housing as well as the quality business space that Kent's parks are so well equipped to deliver.

Office Performance

The uncertainty in the city centre office market seen across the UK has taken its toll on activity in Kent over the last 12 months. While the county's business parks have seen some significant lettings, the limited take-up in Kent's town centres has focused on floorplates of less than 279m² (3,000ft²). Nonetheless, the shortage of quality space has maintained rental values across the county, with the average prime rent at the end of H1 2021 stable at £182m² (£16.90ft²). This translates to an annualised average growth rate of 3% over the last five years, albeit this growth is driven by a select few towns.

The lettings that have occurred included DNS Accountants taking space in the refurbished Old Library in St Faiths Street, Maidstone. The town also saw the arrival of Tiger Law and Tiger HR Ltd, which opened a second office in Sterling House in Maidstone in March.

However, reflecting the national picture, a large number of businesses continue to take a wait and see approach to future requirements, while some are concluding they need less space, but are placing greater emphasis on quality. This has benefited serviced office operators and co-working operations. A survey by Locate in Kent identified 50 co-working locations across the county, with a further ten in the pipeline. The survey found most co-working facilities are operating at over 60% occupancy for hot desks and 80% for private offices as at June 2021, with supply outstripping demand in some areas.

A recent addition to the county's stock includes the BizSpace scheme at Kestrel House and Knightrider House, Knightrider Street, Maidstone. The company purchased and refurbished the two adjacent office buildings, now offering 1,997m² (21,500ft²) of office space, in units of 33-586m² (357-6,310ft²). The scheme has benefited from the continued loss of office space in Maidstone to residential use. Dartford has also seen the opening of co-working space in the former Magistrates Court and police station at Highfield Road. The Hill Hub development, which opened in April, comprises 275m² (2,960ft²) of commercial space, provides desk space for up to 120 people with a mix of open-plan offices and smaller spaces, with meeting rooms, a roof terrace and café. In Gravesend, Whitehall Place opened this year, providing circa 9,000 sq ft of high specification serviced office space within the refurbished former Customs House which overlooks the Thames.

In Whitstable, George Wilson Holdings completed on the renovation of the 836m² (9,000ft²) Radio House, formerly home to Invicta Radio, having bought the building back in 2020. The building, on the John Wilson Business Park, completed in April and is now fully let, with occupiers including Private Jet Charter, Retreat Services, Turner Jackson Day Architects and Red Key Concepts.

CREDIT: GEORGE WILSON HOLDINGS

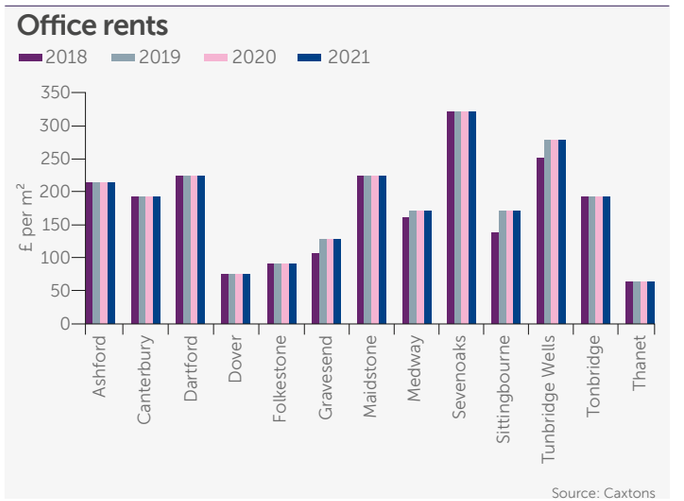
Renovation of Radio House, John Wilson Business Park, Whitstable.

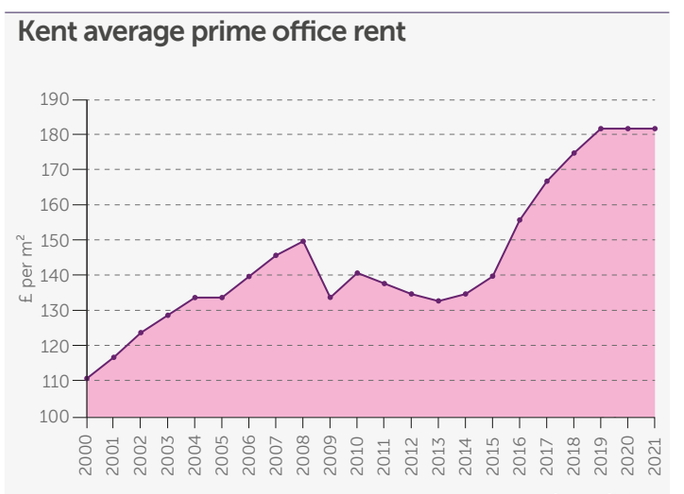
3.1%

Average annualised growth in the Kent prime office rent over the last 5 years
Caxtons

85%

Increase in the average prime Gravesend office rent over the last 5 years
Caxtons





Lettings							
Date	**Location**	**Landlord**	**Tenant**	**Floorspace ft²**	**Rent (pa)**	**Lease term**	**Agent/s**
Mar '21	2nd Floor, Gail House, Lower Stone Street, Maidstone	Brycourt Ltd	NHS Kent & Medway	7,390	£125,630	10 years	Martine Waghorn
Jan '21	55-56 Riverside Estate, Sir Thomas Longley Road, Medway City Estate	Private	Energy Solutions (UK) Ltd	6,540	£49,000	5 Years	Harrisons
Apr '21	Dowding & Frant House, Coach & Horses Passage, Lower Pantiles, Tunbridge Wells	Lower Pantiles LLP	Base Quantum Ltd	2,847	£49,650	5 yrs – Tenant break – 3rd yr	Durlings
Mar '21	The Clock House, Sevenoaks	ABRDN	Lifeways	2,491	£60,000	5 years	Salisbury & Co.

Sales						
Date	**Location**	**Vendor**	**Purchaser**	**Floorspace ft²**	**Capital value**	**Agent/s**
May '21	9 Pembroke Road, Sevenoaks	Yellow Tree Capital	Private	Devt. site with pp for 15,000ft²	Confidential	Salisbury & Co/SHW
Jun '21	Custom House, The Terrace, Gravesend	Cannon Capital Developments	Mile Property Group Ltd	18,123	£1m	Caxtons
Nov '20	Wises Oast Business Centre, Sittingbourne	Private	Janta Fashions Ltd	7,300	£950,000	Sibley Pares
Jul '21	13 Conqueror Court, Sittingbourne	Conqueror Property Partners Ltd	Lower Medway Internal Drainage Board	5,197	£1m	Harrisons

New office space is in the pipeline, including the new Ashford International Studios, which is under development next to the International Station, eventually providing 18,580m² (200,000ft²) film studio complex, with 8,361m² (90,000ft²) of business space in the Grade II Listed former engine sheds. Quinn Estates and U+I received planning consent for the former 5.1ha (12.6 acre) scheme in 2020. Terms are close to being agreed to commence works in 2022. Detailed technical designs are currently being produced.

Tunbridge Wells, which has also lost office stock to residential conversion, is the focus of a significant new urban commercial development on the edge of the city centre. In March, U+I received outline planning consent for the Kingstanding Business Park, Longfield Road, to provide 74,000m² (796,529ft²) of employment space across flexible warehouse and office accommodation. The site is being marketed for sale at the time of writing.

Once again, the county saw relatively few investment sales in the town centre office market, reflecting both the shortage of investment grade stock, but also wider investor caution. The largest transaction was Priory Court, St Johns Road, Dover, 6,839² (73,617ft²) let to HMRC which sold to Elite Commercial REIT. Reflecting a broader trend, the county also saw a couple of owner occupier purchases, including the 1,282m² (13,799ft²) Wharf House in Tonbridge which sold for £3m in July. The town also saw the sale of the 921m² (9,909ft²) Fosse House, High Street, by Bradda Capital for 2.55m (NIY 7.24%) in January to Sakura Limited.

Town centre office market uncertainty has undoubtedly been a product of the pandemic and in this Kent is not alone, but the county has reasons to feel positive. Greater local working has the potential to boost demand, but the evidence suggests quality will become more important.

This is particularly the case if the county is to capitalise on the opportunity presented by the Thames Estuary Production Corridor which has a vision to develop a world-class hub for cultural and creative production. While the sector has inevitably suffered during the pandemic it is identified as a high growth sector for the next decade, with wider economic benefits for professional and business services firms. Inevitably, this will focus attention on whether the county's office stock is fit for purpose over the longer term in an altered post pandemic business landscape.

CREDIT: GRAVESHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Whitehall Place Business Centre, Gravesend.

Industrial and Distribution Performance

Following 2020's record level of industrial and logistics take up across the South East, 2021 looks set to deliver another strong year of activity. The continued expansion and upgrading of facilities by retailers, parcel delivery operators and third party logistics businesses has driven the pace of growth, with Grade A large floorplate space in particularly high demand. Supply chain challenges presented by the pandemic and HGV driver shortages have added further to stock storage requirements.

Across the South East, much of the available floorspace supply is located within the M25 but there remains a shortage of stock in the home counties. This is reflected in Kent, where the last 12 months has seen the absorption of significant new space coming forward through pre-lets. It is notable that rents have continued to see growth across many areas of the county despite the sharp increase in stock over the last couple of years. This follows a period of rapid rental growth between 2015 and 2019, when the Kent average prime industrial rent rose by 30%.

Two of the largest developments to let over the last 12 months were at Bericote's The Powerhouse on the site of the former Littlebrook Power Station near Dartford where an Amazon Distribution Centre in excess of 215,000m² (2.3m ft²), and their biggest in Europe, started operation in the summer. The building has a PV installation on the roof, the largest in the UK, as well as a BREEAM Excellent rating and EPC A rating. At the same site, Ikea pre-let a 41,821m² (450,00ft²) unit which reached practical completion in October.

There were also major lettings at M2 City Link at Medway City Estate and Trilogy in Sittingbourne. Following M2 City Link's pre-let to Selco earlier in 2020, Location 3 and Funding Partners Hermes pre-let Unit 2a and 2b to Argos in the autumn. The building comprised 6,728m² (72,420ft²).

9%

Increase in the Kent annualised average prime industrial rent over the last 3 years
Caxtons

Also in the autumn, GOYA and Aberdeen Standard let the 4,449m² (47,888ft²) unit, Orbital 48, at Littlebrook to DPD. In Sittingbourne, the Tavis House and Barwood Capital Trilogy units 1 and 2, providing 6,810m² (73,302ft²), were let to DHL Parcels Ltd. The 5,740m² (61,783ft²) Europa unit at Trident Close, Sittingbourne is under offer. George Wilson Holdings completed a 5,574m² (60,000ft²) extension to an existing 13,006m² (140,000ft²) warehouse at Lakesview International Business Park, Sparrow Way, Canterbury. Global Freight took occupation in January.

The market has also seen a number of corporate manufacturer lettings. Unit A, comprising 6,400m² (68,891ft²) at The Arc, Snodland, a LaSalle Investment Management and Wrenbridge scheme, was let to Swegon in late 2020. The company, listed in Sweden is a leading supplier in ventilation, heating, cooling and climate optimalisation equipment. In May, the luxury chocolatier, Artisan du Chocolat took the 6,054m² (65,169ft²) Unit M at Orbital Park, Ashford on a ten year lease. Meanwhile, George Wilson Holdings completed St Augustine Business Park at Oyster Bay. The scheme is fully let, with tenants including Herne Bay Locks, Shogun Martial Arts School, Langston Shop Fitters and UK Homes 4 Heroes.

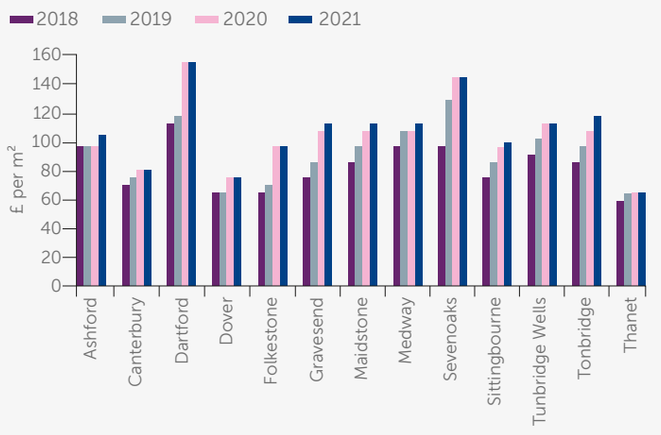
These lettings have left few existing buildings available to let, although there is further stock coming forward. Goodman are currently speculatively constructing 22,184m² (238,800ft²) at Crossways: 249, Dartford. The scheme comprises units of 9,383m², 12,728m² and 22,204m² (101,000ft², 137,000ft² and 239,000ft²). This follows on from the company's continued pre-let success at London Medway Commercial Park, Rochester.

Other speculative schemes under construction, or recently to have completed, include the Dartford Trading Estate

48%

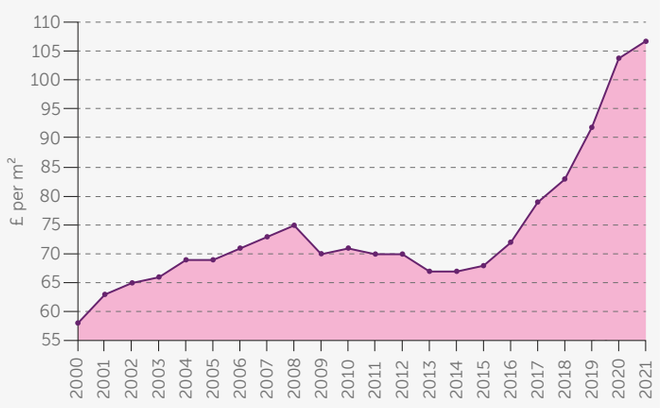
Total increase in Kent average prime industrial rent over the last 5 years
Caxtons

Industrial and distribution rents



Source: Caxtons

Kent average prime industrial and distribution rent



Source: Caxtons

Lettings							
Date	**Location**	**Landlord**	**Tenant**	**Floorspace ft²**	**Rent (pa)**	**Lease term**	**Agent**
Dec '20	Radial 74, The Bridge, Dartford	M&G	CEVA	73,916	£794,597	10 yrs	Altus/CBRE
May '21	Unit 1B, Parkwood Industrial Estate, Bircholt Road, Maidstone	GGT Estates Limited	DX Network Services Ltd	24,929	£168,270	–	Harrisons
Jul '21	59-63 Hopes Lane, Ramsgate	Private Client	Wholefoods Earth Limited	15,595	£70,000	5 years, break at 3	Caxtons
Dec '20	3E Priory Park, Mills Road, Quarry Wood, Aylesford	Lothbury	Hermes	10,901	£114,500	5 years	Altus/Martine Waghorn
Jan '21	Acquisition for tenant, The Cedars, Marden	G G Tomkinson	Rapesco plc	9,300	£74,400	5 years	Salisbury & Co
Dec '20	Unit 23, Waterbrook Park, Ashford	GSE	Cascade Business Supplies	2,565	£31,740	10 yr lease	Sibley Pares/ Knight Frank

Sales						
Date	**Location**	**Vendor**	**Purchaser**	**Floorspace ft²**	**Capital value**	**Agent**
Jun '21	Devt site, Monument Way, Orbital Park, Ashford	Beckett Holdings Ltd	Newco Ltd	1.8 acres	£1.1m	Harrisons
Feb '21	A1-A2 Manor Way Business Park, Swanscombe	AABRS Ltd (Receivers)	Petchey Industries (No 3) Ltd	35,774	£2.1m	Caxtons Joint agents Savills
Feb '21	4, Swan Business Park, Sandpit Rd, Dartford	Aisin Europe	Milton Group	12,195	£1.7m	Altus
Jan '21	Ozengall Pl. Eurokent Bus. Park, Ramsgate	Sandikent Limited	Private purchaser	3,068	£210,000	Caxtons

comprising five units totalling 7,103m² (76,460ft²) and Dartford X also providing five units totalling 17,232m² (185,499ft²). The Arc, Snodland, delivering another five units offering up to 11,274m² (121,367ft²) is now fully pre-let. In addition, a number of speculative trade counter schemes are under construction, all seeing pre-let activity including Kier Trade Park, Gravesend, M2 City Link on the Medway City Estate and Oakdene Trade Park in Wrotham.

Panattoni, the world's largest privately owned industrial developer, has been granted permission to deliver 176,580m² (1.9m ft²) of quality warehousing and distribution space in Kent at a 90 acre site which was previously home to Aylesford Newsprint, close to Junction 4 of the M20. The £180m investment is expected to be fully developed and occupied by 2024. There is further design and build land at Waterbrook Park in Ashford with detailed consent for up

CREDIT: GOODMAN

Crossways Commercial Park, Dartford.

Industrial and Distribution Performance
Continued

to 23,226m² (250,000ft²). In March, a planning application was submitted for MedwayOne, the redevelopment of the former Kingsnorth power station site on the Hoo Peninsula, for a mix of industrial and distribution floorspace, as well as seeking to attract data centres and energy uses. Uniper is seeking consent for the regeneration of 61.5 ha (152 acres) of the larger 113 ha (279 acre) site. Loc8 situated at M20 Junction 8, has recieved planning for a Breeam excellent and EPC A rated warehouse/distribution/ office development with units up to 9,870m² (106,240ft²) with practical completion of the scheme in September 2022.

The market has seen relatively few land sales, but the former Mercedes dealership at Burnham Road, Dartford comprising 0.17 ha (1.77 acres) sold to Wrenbridge for £2.12m per acre in February. At the time of writing, the 3.28ha (8.09 acre) Marley Tiles site, Wrotham, was under offer, while the 13.35ha (33 acre) Kingstanding Business Park, Tunbridge Wells is being offered for sale. The Nuralite Industrial Estate, Rochester, comprising 28,523m² (307,015ft²) on 2.85ha (7.05acres) with 71 current tenancies and detailed planning consent for redevelopment is seeking new investors.

The last 12 months has seen a number of portfolio sales including Chancerygate selling to Norwood Urban Logistics, in addition to schemes at Dartford, Maidstone and Tonbridge. Mileway purchased a portfolio which included the former Cummins warehouse at Columbus Avenue in Manston, Ramsgate 16,724m² (180,021ft²).

In the distribution market, the 13,800m² London Medway Commercial Park was sold by Goodman International to West Midlands Pension in November 2020 for £26,2m (NIY 4.25%). Noatum Logistics plans to maximise storage and operational capacity with an additional mezzanine level that will add 20,903m² (225,000ft²) primarily for fulfilment automation.

This followed on from the sale of the Sicame UK unit comprising 6,039m² (65,000ft²) to Canmoor/Goldman Sachs. The former Simpsons building comprising 3320m² (35,744ft²) at Manor Road, Swanscombe, sold to Petchey Industries (No 3) Ltd. in December 2020 with vacant possession.

The multi-let investment market has also remained active, reflecting strong investor appetite for the sector. Phases 29 and 32 at Gillingham Business Park comprising 8,001m² (86,122ft²) sold in November 2020 for £8m (NIY 6.75%). Moorfield was the purchaser. The 6,883m² (74,092ft²) five unit Dartford Trading Estate sold in December 2020 to RTP Global. Newables was the vendor. January saw Threadneedle sell the 6,493m² (69,893ft²) nine unit Wincheap Trade park, Canterbury to Pears for £6.25m (NIY 7%). While in February the four trade counter units comprising 1,319m² (14,198ft²) at Hilton Road Trade Park, Ashford was purchased by Sevenoaks District Council for £3.8m (NIY 5.2%). Canmoor purchased the 9,920m² (106,781ft²) Eurolink Styles Close, Sittingbourne.

In Sittingbourne, Orchard Street sold the multi let Trinity Trading Estate comprising 38,217m² (411,359ft²) to Arax Properties for £55m (4.65% NIY). The competition for such assets is driving yields inwards, and this was illustrated by the 10,219m² (110,000ft²) Aylesford Commercial Park which sold at a sub 2.85%.

The pandemic driven acceleration in shifting consumer behaviour and retailer business models will continue to support investor demand for the distribution sector. A sector where occupier demand is continuing to grow remains a valuable commodity in the current economic climate. While the rent differential between Kent and the wider M25 market has narrowed, the county remains attractive for occupiers who have seen a sharp increase in occupancy costs. From an investor perspective this will underpin values in market where yields have reached record lows.

In addition to the distribution sector, we also expect the industrial market to continue to perform well. Manufacturing, engineering, repairs and trade counters have remained operating throughout the pandemic with little disruption after the initial lockdown. Again, Kent continues to benefit from a rent advantage, although most of the demand is locally based. As larger companies place greater focus on supply chains this may drive additional demand for industrial space, with relatively lower rent locations in Kent potentially benefiting if they offer an appropriately skilled workforce.

CREDIT: GOODMAN

London Medway Commercial Park, Medway.

The Powerhouse, Dartford.
CREDIT: BERICOTE PROPERTIES

Retail Performance

In contrast to the depths of the initial pandemic lockdown, the retail sector remained open throughout the autumn and winter lockdowns. The leisure sector experienced a more challenging period with many of Kent's town centre and out of town park occupiers only able to open their doors over recent months. With the release of restrictions over the summer, we can start to take stock of the new retail landscape.

In June, the value of retail sales was nearly 10.6% ahead of its pre-pandemic levels. While there has been a small shift back towards spending in physical stores over the summer, the proportion of sales conducted online remains substantially higher than before the crisis, representing over a quarter by value. The volume of sales by retailers with no physical store presence stands 40% ahead of February 2020.

The latest analysis by the BRC-LDC Vacancy Monitor (April 2021) found the overall retail vacancy rate across the UK increased to 14.1% in the first quarter of 2021, 1.9% ahead of the same point last year. Further administrations across the sector including long standing high street names such as Gap and Paperchase have added to vacancies.

While physical retailing may have made a small come-back in statistical terms, the consequences of the pandemic, hastening a decade long shift in consumer behaviour, are clear across Kent's high streets and retail parks. Major retail centres such as Tunbridge Wells, Maidstone and Canterbury have seen few new lettings on their prime streets over the last year. All the county's main towns have experienced increases in vacancy rates with inevitable implications for rents and lease terms.

The year has seen enhanced landlord incentives and greater flexibility on lease lengths and terms, with a growing number of retailers agreeing rents paid monthly in arears. 'Covid clauses' are commonplace, with agreed rent reductions should the store be forced to close.

The average prime Zone A high street rent in Kent has fallen 15% over the last 12 months although this has been driven primarily by the larger retail centres which have felt the loss of national retailers more acutely. While there is little letting evidence, smaller towns are judged to have seen rents remain flat over the last year.

Tunbridge Wells has seen the sharpest fall in prime rents, down 30% in the last 12 months, with a significant increase in vacancies in the core shopping area. However, this has also been accompanied by a shift in 'pitch' towards the High Street which is now at full occupancy for the first time in many years. This follows lettings this year, including Gail's Bakery at 21 High Street. Gail's Bakery also opened in

£1,200 per m²

Tunbridge Wells average prime Zone A high street rent remains highest in Kent despite sharp fall
Cradick Retail

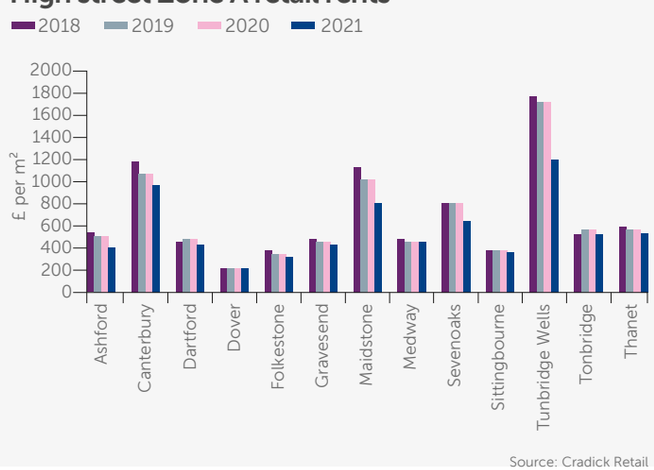
CREDIT: DANDARA

Ground floor retail space at 1887 The Pantiles, the new unique landmark development in Tunbridge Wells.

-3.5%

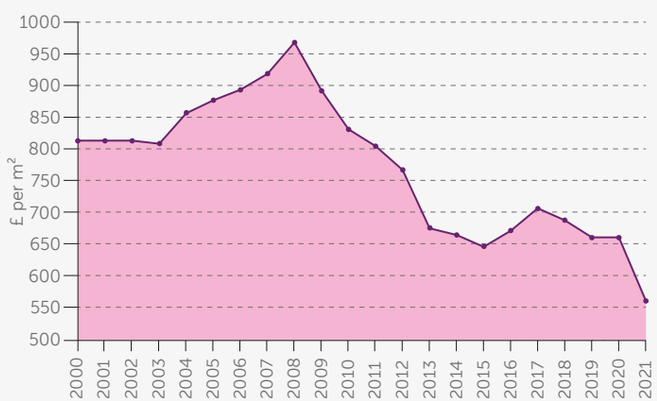
Average annualised change in the Kent average prime Zone A high street rent over the last 5 years
Cradick Retail

High street Zone A retail rents



Source: Cradick Retail

Kent average prime Zone A high street rent



Source: Cradick Retail

Lettings							
Date	**Location**	**Landlord**	**Tenant**	**Floorspace ft²**	**Rent (pa)**	**Lease term**	**Agent**
Feb '21	84-86 Grosvenor Road, Tunbridge Wells	Private	Fireaway Pizza	G – 1,331 B – 1,003	£25,000	15yrs – Tenant break – 5th & 10th yrs – 3 month rent free	Durlings
May '21	106 Cheriton Road, Folkestone	Private	Private	1,726	£18,500	20 years	Stafford Perkins
Apr '21	34 – 36 High Street, Tenterden	Hampton House Properties Limited	The Cranbrook Bakery Limited	850	£41,500	5 years	Caxtons
Dec '20	219 High Street, Chatham	Eastlight Investments Ltd	Mr & Mrs Yomi Jaiyesimi	736	£18,000	15 Years	Harrisons

Sales						
Date	**Location**	**Vendor**	**Purchaser**	**Floorspace ft²**	**Capital value**	**Agent**
May '21	Sevenoaks Garden Centre, Main Road, Sundridge, Sevenoaks	Yellow Beach LLP	C & G Ltd	4.25 acres	£5m	Salisbury & Co & Hurst Warne
Mar '21	216-222 Luton Road, Chatham	Bowman Ballard Distribution Co Ltd	Ali Eren	5,781	£340,000	Harrisons
Jan '21	21 High Street, Broadstairs	Mojon Investments Limited	Nilacraft Limited	3,410	£423,000 (investment sale)	Caxtons
Dec '21	33 High Street, Tunbridge Wells	Private	Centrepoint Ltd	2,773 total net (internal)	£800,000	Durlings
Feb '21	61/61a Mayplace Road East, Barnehurst, Bexleyheath	Private individual	Kova Workplace Ltd	499 + residential accommodation	£305,000	Caxtons

Sevenoaks at Bligh's Meadow in the Phase Eight unit which closed earlier in the year. The new entrant was joined in July by Starbucks in the former Cafe Nero unit.

These lettings reflect a shift towards local shopping and experience. This is also seen in a number of hospitality lettings across the county. At Elwick Place, Ashford, Matches Sports Bar, Grill & Social and Italian restaurant, Unita 4, both opened in 2021 alongside Macknade Food Hall. Similarly, the Spirit of Sittingbourne regeneration scheme saw The Light leisure complex open in May. The complex has an eight-screen cinema, nine-lane bowling alley, retro arcade, diner and three bars.

In Maidstone, PureGym opened in The Mall in April, following its Ashford launch last year. Following a number of restaurant closures in Maidstone, The Green Room took the former Pizza Express building at 32-34 Earl Street. The letting will see the delivery of coffee shop, bar, restaurant and music venue across four floors totalling 830m² (8,930ft²).

The supermarket sector fared relatively well during the pandemic, and there are developments planned. In June planning was approved to allow Lidl to vacate its unit in The Broadway Centre and share space with Wickes in its St Peter's Street building in Maidstone. ALDI plans a second store in Ashford at Waterbrook Park, and at Kings Hill, ALDI acquired a site in July 2021. Public consultation is underway ahead of the submission of a planning application. Meanwhile, Staplehurst saw a 18,000ft² Sainsbury's open in March.

Like the High Street, the county's out of town market is also struggling with vacancies, but there have been lettings. Sofology opened a new store in December at South

CREDIT: CAXTONS

Gail's Bakery at Bligh's Meadow, Sevenoaks.

Retail Performance
Continued

Aylesford Retail Park, while in July Decathlon opened its first store in Kent, taking the 1,115m² (12,000ft²) top floor of Tesco Extra superstore in Broadstairs. At Strood Retail Park Hobbycraft will open in a vacant unit, previously occupied by Carpetright, in late 2021.

The Ashford Designer Outlet has seen a strong return to trading following its reopening in April, with the outdoor environment attracting visitors. The extension to the centre, completed in 2019 is almost fully let. Throughout the pandemic, the Jasmin Vardimon Dance Company has been based in two units at the Outlet, while its new 'creative laboratory' has been under construction on Javelin Way. The development is due to complete in 2022.

Inevitably, Bluewater has felt the pressures of the last 18 months. While vacancies have risen, many retailers with lease options have chosen to retain a presence at the regionally significant centre, but managed costs through moves to smaller units. Signficantly, the centre has also seen several new openings during this most unusual of periods. Zara Concept Store, ProCook, Sleep8 and Moyenne have all taken space over the last year, and in October Amazon opened its 4-star store in the UK in a 325m² (3,500ft²) unit. The leisure offer has also expanded with the opening of the Hangloose Skywire Zipline.

Despite the uncertain backdrop, there were a number of significant investment transactions across the Kent retail market over the last 12 months. The largest purchase was by Realty Income Corporation, paying £44.95m (NIY 4.4%) for the Asda superstore, Pier Approach Road, Gillingham. Legal & General were the vendor. The same investor sold Fountain Retail Park, Tunbridge Wells for £37.25m to Columbia Threadneedle Investments in May. The 10,618m² (114,290ft²) scheme is anchored by a 4,645m² (50,000ft²) M&S. In the city centre market, U+I sold the 8,824m² (95,000ft²) Swanley Square shopping centre for around £11m to Evolve Estates in January 2021. The regeneration scheme has consent for 250 residential units. Generally, local authority purchases for income investment have slowed, but Maidstone Borough Council purchased the long leasehold interest in the Lockmeadow Entertainment Centre for £19.1m, with a view to introducing improvements for the benefit of the town, many of which are now almost complete.

While the retail market remains challenging, these investment sales reflect a longer term view of the sector. Letting evidence over the last year underlines the shift towards experience high streets, with clothing and other traditional high street occupiers trading places with food, drink and activities. Whether in town centres or on retail parks, investors are seeking asset management and repositioning opportunities. Towns that will attract investment will therefore need a longer term vision for the post pandemic reality. The expansion of the creative industries across Kent's towns can combine with city centre homes, higher levels of home working and local business growth to deliver dynamic urban environments. For many of the county's retail centres, the coming 12 months will be a period of story building for the future.

CREDIT: MACKNADE

Food Hall, Macknade, Ashford.

Proposal for Aldi, Kings Hill.
CREDIT: PROLOGIS

Rural Performance

Farmland values remain favourable and demand strong
Following a slow start to the farmland market, average values across the South East remain at the upper end of those across all regions of the UK as supply constraints begin to ease.

Since the turn of the year, UK farmland has evolved with good market levels of activity for public and private sales, according to Chris Spofforth, head of Savills South East rural agency team. There have been notable value increases particularly for amenity and poorer quality farmland.

Analysis by Savills rural research shows that, on the supply side, there are early signs that the theme of low supply, which has dominated the farmland market in the last couple of years, is beginning to ease.

In the first half of this year, 58% more farmland was publicly marketed than in the same period last year, although for obvious reasons, that was an exceptional year. Across the UK, supply to 30 June 2021 is only 8% below the five-year average, which marks a significant swing in comparison to activity last year.

According to Savills, this suggests previous uncertainties surrounding trade deals and the Agricultural Transition are making way for renewed confidence, allowing farmers to make informed business decisions. There will be some lead in time before this is fully reflected in supply.

"Demand, based on our applicant numbers, remains strong," says Chris. "The pool of potential buyers is growing more rapidly than before, with 28% more registered throughout the UK at the half year point compared to the same period in 2020. There are a number of buyers with rollover funds to invest and commercial farmers seeking quality farms."

28%

more registered potential buyers throughout the UK at the half year point compared to the same period in 2020
Savills

According to Savills research, although values increased for all land types, average livestock and poorer quality livestock land outperformed with 3% and 3.2% growth, respectively. This means that values for average livestock land have almost returned to peak levels last seen in 2015.

Putting things into context at a regional level, Chris adds: "Average farmland values in the South East remain at the upper end of values across all regions of the UK. Whilst one would perhaps expect this in the residential and commercial sectors given the affluence of the region and accessibility to London, our farmland, with the exception of a few notable pockets, is generally and technically less productive than other regions.

"So why is it that our land in the South East remains in such demand and keeps prices so favourable? There's not a single answer, it can be amenity, it can be viticulture, it can be tax driven, it can be a safe-haven, it can be a roll-over requirement or it can be as simple as a postcode. Added to this is that there is a new environmental tier to our market which encompasses natural capital, carbon offsetting and personal pursuits such as re-wilding. One thing for sure is that the imbalance between supply and demand, particularly with the private market so strong, will continue to drive achievable prices."

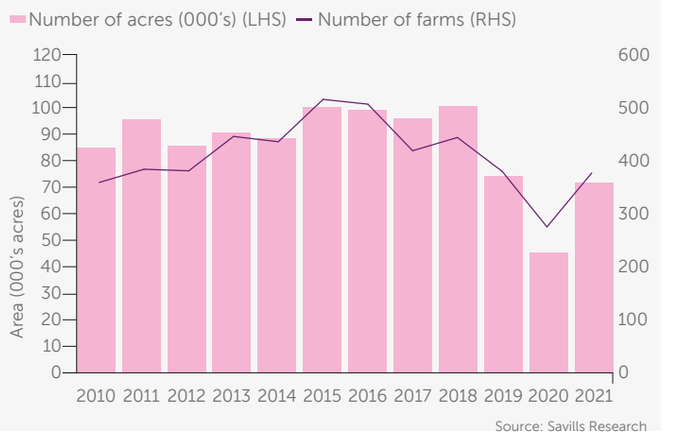
With the additional detail of how the farming industry may look over the next few years, Savills anticipates supply will not increase as quickly as originally anticipated. Market outlooks are positive and farmers will take time to process and review how the changes occurring in the industry affect their businesses.

For more information:
Michael Wooldridge
07979 811511

Chris Spofforth
07812 965379

> "Our expectation is that value drivers remain largely unchanged, although amenity land is likely to continue to outperform other farmland this year as we settle into the post-pandemic way of life and the environmental agenda encourages further investment into rural assets.
>
> Chris Spofforth

H1 publicly marketed farmland supply for Great Britain



Source: Savills Research

Opposite: Manor Farm Estate, Wateringbury near Maidstone has secured permission for a new brewery, brasserie, bar and viewing area to allow visitors to watch the beer-making process. Architects Taylor Hares' masterplan for the estate includes a grain and hops store, bottling plant and eight hoppers' huts, providing accommodation for tourists as well as workers during the hop-picking season. Work is expected to start on the site in August 2022.
CREDIT: Taylor Hare Architects

LEADER Grant Funding in Kent

Kent's LEADER programme is a source of funding for rural businesses, farmers, foresters and communities to help secure a sustainable future for the rural economy. The LEADER Programme is a bottom-up, community-led approach to the delivery of the Rural Development Programme for England funded by Defra and the European Union. The planning, decision-making and implementation is via Local Action Groups made up of private, public and community sector volunteers with a wide range of knowledge and experience of local rural issues.

LEADER in Kent has a budget of £5.25m for 2015-2020 and applications are currently closed. The emphasis is on providing jobs and growth in rural areas. It has a rolling funding mechanism with a minimum grant of £2,500 and a maximum of £50,000 to £100,000 (higher under certain circumstances), at a rate of 40% of eligible costs for commercial projects.

Recent LEADER supported developments include:

Community Store, Detling

Detling Community Interest Company (CIC) was set up to develop and run a new community store on Detling Village Green. It has a post office and a small café/community hub. It is made from a converted 40x16ft container with utilities installed and shelving, service counter and dairy cabinet, coolers and freezer. The store is an example of repurposing to maximum effect whilst avoiding expensive build costs. The shop will also serve the nearby villages of Thurnham and Boxley which have a combined population of 10,700 as well as walkers/cyclists on the Pilgrims Way long-distance walking route. The parish council will also rent space in the facility. The project will be run on a commercial basis but as a CIC any profits are reinvested back into the company.

Slough Fort, Allhallows, Medway

Slough Fort is one of a series of defences built on the Thames and Medway to protect London and the Naval Dockyard at Chatham, built in 1867 and added to up until the end of 19th Century. The Fort was decommissioned in 1920, sold by the government in 1929 and is well preserved and substantially intact being listed as Grade II in 2009. A local community group took over the long-term preservation and restoration of the Fort in 2013. The Slough Fort Preservation Trust now oversees the transformation of the Fort into a community and tourism asset.

It includes flexible, usable space for local activities, a focus for the military heritage of the Thames and Medway estuary and Hoo Peninsula and generating commercial activities through tourism and local activities and craft-based ventures. Phase 1 has been completed with the clearing of the main magazine building, brickwork repairs and installation of power and lighting.

Assistance was given by LEADER for phase 2 which saw the instalment of specialist windows and doors to the historic building to make it weather tight and enable internal decoration along with fit-out of the community space, events space, interpretation room and classroom. Ongoing restoration of the site will expand the space available for additional community activities, interpretation/displays, café, craft and local retail.

Musket Brewery, Maidstone

Musket Brewery is a family owned micro-brewery located in Linton, brewing premium real ale. The premises were housed in a redundant mushroom shed at Loddington Farm which limited the size of the micro-brewery and production. LEADER assistance was given to convert another farm building and purchase new brewing equipment to allow expansion to cater for increasing demand. This included a new 'tap' room and social space for visitors and for beer tasting and on-site sales as part of a brewery experience expected to attract around 6,000 visitors over three years. The project will also benefit other businesses on site through increased footfall.

CREDIT: LINDA PIZANI WILLIAMS

New Musket Brewery, Loddington Farm, Maidstone.

CREDIT: GAYNOR STOKES

New Fisherman's Lodge (Clubhouse), Tenterden Trout Waters.

Tenterden Trout Waters

In 2015 Tenterden Trout Waters was voted one of the Top 100 Stillwater Trout Fisheries in Britain. In 2016, the business had risen to the Top 50 and has an excellent reputation with fly fishermen. However, facilities required updating and a new Fisherman's Lodge (clubhouse) was needed. LEADER assistance was given to build the clubhouse with kitchen, toilets and indoor area for fishermen to relax. The new facilities reflect the quality of the fishing experience offered and in turn grow the business.

Chilton Farm Courtyard Bed & Breakfast, Alkham Valley

This farm diversification project converted redundant traditional farm buildings around a courtyard to bed & breakfast accommodation for 10 people with a breakfast room/meeting room for local groups. The project aims to capitalise on the popular footpaths, bridleways and cycle routes crossing the Alkham Valley. With livery facilities guests can bring their own horses to the farm and the new development will support two full-time employees.

Kent County Council Village and Community Hall Grant Scheme

Community buildings are at the heart of community life and are an essential and indispensable feature of any area. They are important components in sustaining inclusive and active communities, particularly in rural areas where fewer venues and services are available. Community buildings have an increasingly multi-purpose role, as a social centre, arts centre, sports centre and potentially for education, health or retail services.

The economic contribution of the network of community buildings in Kent is significant. They support jobs, either directly (e.g. cleaners, caretakers, grounds maintenance) or indirectly (pre-school staff, shop and post-office staff, fitness instructors, caterers). They also use local building firms, electricians and other local services.

The majority of community buildings are small charities run by local volunteer trustees and are heavily reliant on fundraising. Often the leaky roof, poor kitchen or toilet facilities, a cold, damp hall or the realisation that community activities are being turned away from using the building because there is simply not enough room, leads hall management committees to turn to Kent County Council's Village and Community Hall Grant Scheme.

Over the last 20 years, 200 communities throughout Kent have benefitted from over £4 million of grants from Kent County Council to support the building, refurbishment and development of facilities that provide vital space for the communities they serve. Action for Communities in Rural Kent (ACRK) has a major role in the operation of the scheme, as well as providing a specialist comprehensive advice and information service to the volunteers who run and manage community buildings.

Recent examples of supported projects:

Frittenden Memorial Hall

A full remodelling and refurbishment of the hall first built in 1963. Works included upgraded kitchen and toilets and improved heating/insulation throughout the building as well as opening up the hall to make the most of the available space. There will also be the addition of a meeting room and new windows and doors at the rear.

Newenden – new community hall

A new, modern and accessible hall to replace the old village hall which was built in 1922 and closed in 2019 due to its condition. It comprises 170m^2 (1830ft^2) and is attached to, and integrated with, the existing sports pavilion in Newenden. The building will provide an excellent facility for the whole community offering health clinic, meeting rooms, a conference hall for up to 70 people, playgroup and enhanced catering facilities.

Maidstone St Faith's Centre – new community hall

St Faith's Centre will be a new modern, bright, accessible and safe environment, designed to be multipurpose and will replace the existing St Faith's church building. The building will increase the capacity for mother and baby groups, children's activities, music, dance, drama, keep fit, support groups, quizzes, variety shows and church activities and services. Both the existing community and those in the new communities in new housing developments nearby will benefit.

For more information about the grant scheme:
http://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/community-grants-and-funding/village-and-community-hall-grant-scheme

For more information about the ACRK:
http://www.ruralkent.org.uk

CREDIT: HAWKES ARCHITECTURE

Proposals for St Faith's Centre in Maidstone – now underway.

Residential Performance

As we discussed in last year's report, the residential sector remains the surprise of the pandemic. The intense pace of activity has continued over the last 12 months, with the first anxious months of lockdown and construction site closures a distant memory in the market. Going into the summer of 2021, the end of the Stamp Duty exclusion scheme presented some concern, but the market has continued to thrive.

All districts across Kent outperformed both the South East and UK average house price increase over the 12 months to the end of H1 2021, according to bespoke analysis undertaken by Zoopla for this report. A growing premium on space, both gardens and separate work areas, boosted demand for homes in Kent. Compared with the South East average, the county remains more affordable in relative terms, although this disparity narrowed over the last year.

All areas across the county experienced price growth as existing and in-mover households sought homes in a market with a dearth of supply. The commuter districts of Dartford and Gravesham saw a relatively slower pace of growth, although this follows strong price increases in the years prior to the pandemic. With a shortage of second hand homes on the market, the new homes sector has seen frantic levels of activity in many areas. While homebuyers continue to focus on houses, affordability has driven pragmatism in a challenging market. Younger buyers are more comfortable with city centre flats, particularly as restrictions have subsided and the benefits of urban living have returned across towns in Kent.

Given the pace of demand in the market, construction activity has continued and a number of residential schemes have been bought forward. More than 2,200 homes have now been completed at Whitecliffe, Ebbsfleet Garden City. In July, Ebbsfleet Development Corporation granted planning permission to Westerhill Homes for Alkerden Gateway comprising 67 custom built homes, including 17 affordable units, designed by award winning Architect BPTW. At the same time, 235 new homes and a neighbourhood green were approved for Countryside Properties with Clarion Housing as their next phase of development in Ashmere Village.

Average new build price range by location
Residential new build land values (Q1 2021)

Location	New build average price achieved (£/ft²) Houses & Apartments
Ashford	£325 - £425
Canterbury	£375 - £500
Dartford	£400 - £500
Dover	£300 - £400
Folkestone and Hythe	£310 - £500
Gravesham	£375 - £475
Maidstone	£350 - £450
Medway	£330 - £430
Sevenoaks	£550 - £825
Swale	£300 - £435
Thanet	£310- £400
Tonbridge and Malling	£410 - £525
Tunbridge Wells	£425 - £675

Source: RPC Land & New Homes

In Medway, the first phases of the Peel L&P Chatham Waters development over 26 acres of brownfield land are well progressed with 199 apartments by X1 completed. Russell WBHO is also building 193 apartments for private rent which will complete this summer. Overall, the development comprises close to 75 acres which will include up to 950 dwellings, about a quarter of which will be affordable.

In Gravesend, in addition to progress with Reef's 242 apartments at The Charter, Quinn Estates' Clifton Slipways will deliver 227 apartments as part of the riverside regeneration. Albion Waterside is a new riverside neighbourhood in Milton, Gravesend, which is in the advanced stages of gaining a hybrid planning approval. To be delivered by Joseph Homes, when completed it will deliver 1,500 new homes to ambitious LiveWell standards along with commercial space.

In Swale a substantial number of homes are in the pipeline. At Queenborough & Rushenden on Sheppey, some 100 homes are already up and running at what is the first stage of a £400million regeneration project which will eventually deliver 1,100 homes. Elsewhere on Sheppey, SW Attwood and Partners are putting forward plans for a carbon neutral 1,500 home development on Lower Road, Minster dubbed 'Sheppey ZeroC'.

In Thanet, plans are being considered for over 3,600 houses. In Birchington, Ptarmigan Land and Millwood Designer Homes made an application for farmland off the Canterbury Road in January. Millwood have also sought consent for 2,000 homes at Westgate/Garlinge.

Otterpool Park, proposed by landowners Folkestone and Hythe District Council, is planned for up to 10,000 new homes built in a new garden town on a 770 ha (1,902 acre) site, to be developed over the next thirty years. Consultation has been underway during 2021. Also in Folkestone, the first 84 homes at 'Shoreline' on the shingle in front of the cliff lift are progressing well, and the second phase has now been revealed. The development comprises 120 homes in two regency style symmetrical blocks facing each other with private and communal gardens and shared facilities including a beach terrace.

In December 2020 permission was granted for Mountfield Park, Canterbury, a 4,000-home scheme on 550 acres of farmland to the south of Canterbury. The scheme, the largest ever proposed for the district, is being spearheaded by developers Corinthian. Full permission has been granted for 140 homes and outline consent for a further 3,860. It is expected the first homes will be completed by the end of 2021.

Chilmington Green near Ashford, saw the first new home owners move in last year, as well as the completion of the new primary school. Nearby, at Kennington, the Conningbrook Park development by Quinn Estates was approved by Ashford Borough Council last May. Full permission was granted for 288 homes and outline permission for the remaining 437. Work on the scheme has however stalled amid concerns over water quality at Stodmarsh Nature Reserve near Canterbury. This has pressed the pause button on developments across east Kent while the cause of high levels of nitrogen and phosphorous are examined.

CREDIT: QUINN ESTATES

Proposal for Highsted Park, Sittingbourne.

House price change in Kent to end of June 2021

Location	5 year cumulative change	5 yr annual average growth	12 month change	Average house price
Ashford	18.3%	3.4%	6.2%	£314,000
Canterbury	22.7%	4.2%	6.7%	£327,500
Dartford	13.0%	2.5%	4.0%	£325,300
Dover	23.1%	4.2%	6.7%	£266,800
Folkestone and Hythe	17.8%	3.3%	6.0%	£275,500
Gravesham	13.7%	2.6%	4.4%	£300,900
Maidstone	16.6%	3.1%	5.0%	£316,100
Medway	16.6%	3.1%	5.0%	£258,700
Sevenoaks	18.1%	3.4%	6.2%	£490,000
Swale	16.9%	3.2%	5.1%	£265,300
Thanet	22.2%	4.1%	6.4%	£260,200
Tonbridge and Malling	18.2%	3.4%	6.2%	£389,600
Tunbridge Wells	17.6%	3.3%	6.0%	£422,100

Source: Zoopla House Price Index

In Kings Hill, Countryside Properties are continuing their scheme for 132 homes, and Clarion Housing Group are developing 166 homes over three housing areas, of which around two thirds are affordable. In addition, Anchor Lifestyle Developments is constructing 75 assisted living apartments, which will accommodate over 55's from Spring 2022. A further phase of housing development in Kings Hill received consent in February 2020 and will provide 350 dwellings of all types, along with additional open space. In January 2021, Bellway acquired land which has permission for a mix of 350 homes of all types and expect construction to commence in early 2022.

At Highsted Park, Sittingbourne, Quinn Estates, in partnership with Kent Science Park and a consortium of local landowners, submitted a planning application in July 2021 for a mixed-use development, to include 9,250 new homes over a 30 year time period. The developer also gained planning consent, in April 2021, for Wises Lane, an urban extension to Sittingbourne. The scheme will eventually provide 675 new residential units, including 81 affordable homes.

Nearby in Faversham, George Wilson Holdings submitted a planning application for 45 flats, over a third of which will be affordable, on a brownfield parcel of land previously used as a Network Rail service yard. The scheme will include electric charging points at a 1:1 ratio.

High levels of transactions and price growth have brought forward the construction of some sites and phases of longer term schemes. With depleted stocks, the housebuilders are seeking to replenish land banks, driving up land values across the county. Generally, there is a preference for sites with the benefit of planning, particularly for houses. The ability to deliver stock quickly and maintain cash flow are priorities which have dented demand for sites with an apartment focus.

This said, Pentland Homes received consent to convert three redundant office blocks to residential providing 27 homes at Hawkinge, near Folkestone. Generally, the pace of office to residential conversions had slowed over recent years, but with greater uncertainty in the office market, a further trickle of schemes have come forward.

The strength of the housing market over the last 18 months was probably one of the more unexpected outcomes of this difficult pandemic period. The acceleration of home working, and the centre stage role of our homes, has refocused priorities and, as we noted in last year's report, has the potential to strengthen local communities and economies. This is a positive consequence from a dreadful period. Potentially, a reinvigorated focus on community also provides a solid springboard for the new villages under development across the county which will be so important to Kent's future economic development.

CREDIT: GEORGE WILSON HOLDINGS

Proposal for 45 flats at Station Road, Faversham.

Inward Investment

About Locate in Kent

As Kent's inward investment agency, our aim is to encourage and support more businesses to set up and expand in Kent. We do this by providing information to help businesses and investors find the right locations, and connecting the right people with each other. We've already helped thousands of companies realise their ambitions in Kent, so you can be assured of our support before, during and after you locate in the county. Rely on us to:

- Advise with property searches and development plans.
- Introduce you to the professionals that will get your operations up and running quickly.
- Connect you to the academic pool of cutting-edge innovation and knowledge.
- Help you identify local partners and suppliers.
- Connect you to the local and global business networks.
- Advise on funding for your project.

Looking to the future Locate in Kent has identified key opportunities for the region that will attract significant investment and create new jobs.

Investment performance

Locate in Kent successfully helped 92 companies last year (August 2020 – July 2021) to set up, move or expand in Kent and Medway, projected to create 1,935 new jobs over the next three years and retain 2,037 jobs. At the end of July 2021, Locate in Kent had a pipeline of 235 investment projects for companies looking to start up, expand or relocate in Kent and Medway, with 35% of them being overseas companies.

Notable Investments

Many investments in Kent and Medway this year have reflected the region's prime choice for logistics for nearly every industry.

The £205m Amazon facility at Dartford at 215,000m^2 (2.3m ft^2) reached practical completion this summer, just as construction began on the global online retailer's third facility in Ashford; thus catapulting Amazon as one of the region's largest employers with 2,000 staff.

Two further schemes achieving practical completion at M25 Junction 1 were Bericote's Powerhouse 450 taken by Ikea and Goodman's big sheds at Commercial Park, Crossways.

Megger, the Dover based developer, manufacturer and distributor of electrical testing equipment completed its multi-million-pound investment in extending its manufacturing and head office facility.

Glencore, Cemex and Seacon invested in their facilities in Northfleet supporting the delivery of the Thames Vision, the development framework for more freight using the river instead of roads.

Cemex invested £30m in a state-of-the-art sea-going, suction hopper dredger in addition to their £4m investment in a new dry discharge system the year before. Seacon are investing in a programme of improvements including a jetty, new offices and warehouse buildings and acquisition of land next to Seacon's original site. By removing old buildings, the company has created additional trailer space essential for its logistics contracts.

Three new hotels came on stream in 2021. Hampton by Hilton hotels in Canterbury and Ashford and a Travelodge in Sandwich, just in time for the 149th Open Golf Championship, creating new jobs and much needed capacity for the visitor economy in the region's most visited areas.

Major sites ready for occupancy in 2022/23

Kingstanding, Tunbridge Wells

Plans to transform an unused 12ha (30acre) brownfield site into a thriving business park received consent in the summer and was put on the market by the promoters U+I shortly afterwards. The scheme addresses a shortfall of Grade A office and industrial space provision in the west of the region and is a much-needed catalyst for business growth. Well-connected and accessible by car, bus and train, the site has direct access to the newly improved A21 and is a short journey to the M25 providing a prime commercial development opportunity.

Panattoni Park, Aylesford

The 36.4ha (90acre) brownfield site has been vacant since 2015 when Aylesford Newsprint closed, ending a 90-year history of papermaking on the River Medway. Panattoni is the largest developer of logistics facilities in Europe. The redevelopment will give a new lease of life to this redundant brownfield site and create 3,000 jobs for the local area. The scheme is seven industrial buildings offering 177,000m^2 (1.9m ft^2) of new commercial floorspace with units to support the growth of local companies. When fully operational, the site will deliver more than £140m per annum of economic value to the Borough of Tonbridge & Malling and Kent as a whole, by attracting some of the world's leading companies to the site. Construction began in 2021, with first occupation expected spring 2022 and completion by 2024.

Innovation Park, Medway

This is a new opportunity for high-value technology, engineering, manufacturing and knowledge-intensive businesses looking to grow in the South East. It will support the development of 101,000 m^2 (1.09m ft^2) of commercial space to provide indoor and outdoor informal meeting space and networking hubs that create an innovative community. Innovation Park Medway has excellent connectivity, strategically positioned with motorway access. The Park is one mile from the M2, three miles from the M20 and close to the High Speed One network.

Medway One

The proposed regeneration and redevelopment of the former Kingsnorth power station site to create a modern new employment space on the Hoo Peninsula. Leading international energy company Uniper owns the site and is bringing forward redevelopment plans. With 330,000m^2 (3.5m ft^2) of employment space that could create around 2,000 to 2,500 permanent, full-time equivalent jobs once fully occupied. The scheme will offer a mixture of commercial, manufacturing and industrial uses, storage and distribution including data centre and energy uses.

Loc8, Maidstone

The £47m mixed-used scheme located on the Ashford Road, Junction 8 of the M20, will deliver a range of modern, sustainable buildings in a landscaped setting with the potential to create up to 1,200 new jobs. The commercial units will have footprint sizes ranging from 440m^2 (4,736ft^2) to 4,950m^2 (53,281ft^2), targeting small to medium sized businesses. There will be extensive planting of native woodland, new ponds and the prominent use of local materials throughout the site.

In the planning pipeline

White Cliffs Business Park, Dover is undergoing an extension for the Inland Border Facility (IBF) and the Rapid Transit Route to facilitate Dover's new Fastrack bus service. Kent County Council is managing both projects. A further 27ha (66acres) for employment uses is being promoted for the Local Plan Review as well as an area known as The Triangle containing two smaller sites of 4.2ha (10.5acres) and 6.8ha (17 acres).

Otterpool Park is the proposed Garden Town located close to Hythe with excellent connectivity to London and Europe by road and rail. Outline planning permission has been submitted for this residential-led mixed-use development comprising up to 8,500 homes alongside schools, health facilities, retail, leisure and commercial uses as well as open space and public realm.

CREDIT: PROJECT CENTRE/MEDWAY COUNCIL

Proposal for the boulevard at Innovation Park, Medway.

Strategic projects

Manston Airport

The plans for Manston Airport provide air freight operators with a realistic alternative to London airports, easing road congestion caused by freight lorries and boosting economic growth and jobs in Kent. The proposals could create thousands of jobs across East Kent and the wider national economy by the airport's 20th year of operation.

London Resort

London Resort Company Holdings is proposing to develop a world-class, sustainable, next generation entertainment resort known as 'London Resort', set over 465ha (1,150acres) on Swanscombe Peninsula. The first theme park 'gate' will open in 2024 and the second by 2029. The project promises thousands of direct and indirect jobs in the construction phase and operation of the resort.

Ebbsfleet Garden City

Ebbsfleet Garden City, will attract 36,000 new residents in up to 15,000 new homes and up to 30,000 new jobs. It is sandwiched between the River Thames and the North Kent greenbelt 'where London meets the Garden of England' on the High Speed One train line. The development is focussed around four strategic sites; Ebbsfleet Central (to include Ebbsfleet International Station, 4,000 homes and a health employment focus); Eastern Quarry (over 6,000 new homes across two new villages); Northfleet Riverside (to re-open public access to the Thames and include a new linear park) and Swanscombe Peninsular.

Property searches and advice

Our commercial property portal features thousands of available business units or office space across Kent. Our specialist team is on hand to share their local knowledge and expertise to help you kick start your project. We support with insight, feasibility studies, high level planning discussions and finding sites not being marketed.

To find the right location for your business:
www.locateinkent.com/property-search

For help in setting up or expanding your business in Kent:
enquiries@locateinkent.com or 01732 520 700

Leisure and Tourism Performance

> During summer 2020 we saw occupancy recover to a high of 64% in August driven by a preference for the strong coastal and rural product offer in Kent.

Update on performance

Tourism, hospitality, events, culture, travel and leisure have been among the hardest hit sectors of the economy as a result of the pandemic. Latest forecasts from Visit England estimate that there was a 63% drop in domestic tourism in 2020 and Tourism Economics predicts that international visits are unlikely to return to pre-pandemic levels before 2025 at the earliest (UK Tourism Scenario Forecasts).

During 2020 Kent serviced accommodation providers experienced an average occupancy of 47.4% which unsurprisingly represents a decrease of -37.1% against 2019. However, during summer 2020 we saw occupancy recover to a high of 64% in August driven by a preference for the strong coastal and rural product offer in Kent. This short-term boost meant that Kent fared better than the national and regional situation where we saw an average decrease of over 50%. The impact of pandemic restrictions led to reduced footfall and additional costs for all businesses in the visitor economy. There was a disproportionate impact on indoor and urban attractions which reported a much greater drop in footfall and spend compared to rural and outdoor venues. (Visit Kent 2020 Annual Business Barometer) The latest figures for June 2021 show that 87% of attractions had reopened and domestic tourism had driven an average occupancy of 73.5% compared to 80.6% in June 2019 and an average daily rate of £63.68 which is almost on par with 2019. (Visit Kent June 2021 and June 2019 Business Barometer)

Data published by Visit Kent in December 2020 on the economic impact of the Kent visitor economy prior to the pandemic demonstrates the importance the sector makes to the Kent economy both directly and through supply chains. In 2019 Kent welcomed a record 66.5m visitors, who made a staggering £4.1bn contribution to the county and supported over 11% of all jobs. (Economic Impact of the Kent Visitor Economy 2019). The Visit Kent Visitor Economy Recovery Strategy aims to restore visitor numbers and value to their pre-pandemic levels by 2024 by supporting businesses to survive the crisis, restoring consumer confidence, visitor numbers and spend and working strategically to ensure the long-term sustainability of the sector.

Visit Kent have secured funding from several programmes to help drive this recovery. Campaigns supported by VisitEngland and the South East Local Enterprise Partnership have helped to rebuild confidence, drive demand and capitalise on opportunities for the sector. Through the Interreg Experience Programme 125 businesses are receiving support to develop new experiential products and take them to market. Visit Kent is also leading on the South East Local Enterprise Partnership visitor economy recovery programme Revi-VE which aims to deliver long-term resilience through small grants for businesses to support adaptation and the development of place-based networks and campaigns to promote Kent.

Investment funding and attractions

Other funding has also been secured by destinations around the county to support regeneration, protect heritage assets and reimagine our high streets. Ramsgate, Chatham and Dover all secured funding from the Future High Streets Fund with both Ramsgate and Chatham also receiving High Street Heritage Action Zone status. Dover will also begin it's £2.94m project to improve the Market Square in summer 2021 and the Canterbury Riverside mixed-use development with a public square, cinema, restaurants and bars will open in summer 2021.

CREDIT: ROYAL ST. GEORGES GOLF CLUB

The postponed 149th Open at Royal St. George's Golf Club, Sandwich, welcomed 32,000 spectators.

CREDIT: HOLLAWAY

Proposal for an extension and new spa at Hythe Imperial Hotel.

The postponed 149th Open also arrived at Royal St. George's Golf Club in Sandwich in July welcoming around 32,000 spectators on competition days and reaching a global TV audience of 125 million. Cultural events delayed from 2020 have harnessed international and local creative talent to drive visitor footfall in 2021. Highlights include Folkestone Triennial, Estuary Festival, England's Creative Coast, Electric Medway and Rapture gaming festival. Building on these success stories, Medway have submitted a bid to be the UK City of Culture in 2025 and London Golf Club have been shortlisted as a potential host for the 2031 Ryder Cup supported by plans for a 130-bed luxury hotel, conferencing facilities, extensive banqueting & meeting rooms, health spa and leisure facilities due to be completed by 2028.

Despite the current uncertainly, investment in quality accommodation and hospitality continued with Hampton by Hilton opening new hotels in Canterbury and Ashford. Restaurants celebrating local Kentish produce also opened during this period including a second location for The Bridge Arms just outside Canterbury which was taken by new Michelin-starred owners, Rocksalt's owners opened the trendy Pilot Beach Bar and Little Rock restaurant at Folkestone Harbour Arm and Macknade Fine Foods have opened a third outlet in Hoopers department store, Tunbridge Wells. The Coachworks in Ashford and Faith in Strangers in Margate are new unique venues which also offer co-working space, catering for people who have relocated to the area and the rise in remote working and the workcation trend.

Work continues on the Amelia Scott arts, heritage and cultural venue in Tunbridge Wells which is due to open its doors in Spring 2022, the F51 Urban Sports Park in Folkestone is due to open in 2022 and work has started on new visitor facilities and café in Maidstone's Mote Park. Investment in existing cultural and heritage attractions is also taking place with upgrades completed at the Turner Contemporary in Margate and a £9.1m Heritage Lottery Funded restoration of the Maison Dieu in Dover beginning this year. Planning permission was granted at the end of October last year for a new £3m leisure and spa facility at the Hythe Imperial Hotel. Following consultation, London Resort, a world class entertainment resort planned for the Swanscombe Peninsula, submitted a Development Consent Order to the Planning Inspectorate on 31st December 2020.

Large-scale projects planned for the county also continue to move forward. Following consultation, London Resort, a world class entertainment resort planned for the Swanscombe Peninsula, submitted a Development Consent Order to the Planning Inspectorate on 31st December 2020.

Visit Kent
www.visitkent.co.uk

CREDIT: HOLLAWAY

The F51 Urban Sports Park in Folkestone is due to open in 2022.

Infrastructure and Regeneration

North Kent

Dartford

The Borough of Dartford is in the heart of the Thames Estuary growth area at a pivotal point between Greater London, Kent and Essex. It has excellent connections to central London, the South East and UK and the continent via the strategic road and rail network. The intersection of the A2 and M25 and the Dartford Crossing provide a unique locational advantage to attract investment interest and drive growth.

Dartford has one of the fastest growing populations in England. Economic indicators highlight the strong economy, with Dartford in the top 5% in terms of employment and in the top 20% for GVA per head, workplace earnings and job density.

Reflecting a well-placed location, Dartford railway station is very well used and will continue to thrive given the connection with Crossrail (Elizabeth Line) tube services at Abbey Wood to Canary Wharf, the West End and Heathrow. Abbey Wood is just 12-minutes away by train with residents closer than ever before to the Underground. The first Elizabeth Line services are due to start in 2022. Working in partnership Dartford Borough Council is lobbying to build on this connection with the proposed 'C2E' (Connectivity to Ebbsfleet) project, with the government overseeing the development of a business case in support of scheme delivery.

Improvements to the A2 Bean and Ebbsfleet junctions are underway. Improvements will serve demand from major development at Ebbsfleet Garden City: the Whitecliff site (formerly Eastern Quarry), Ebbsfleet Green, Ebbsfleet International Station and the proposed large mixed-use Ebbsfleet Central. It will also ease access to Bluewater shopping centre. The area will also benefit from the upgrade to the national road network that will occur with the proposed Lower Thames Crossing (due 2029) to relieve the Dartford Crossing and increase the resilience of the local road system.

Dartford town centre

Particular progress has been made in taking forward private and public investment here. Dartford town centre Framework sets a high standard of development, identifying improvements to accessibility and environment. Around 5,000 new homes will significantly support the future vibrancy of the town.

Private investment on key sites is being complemented by £12m of public funding for transport and public realm improvements. In addition s106 contributions are being added to extend the transport improvements:

- a much enhanced and pedestrian-friendly new square for the town has been created linking the High Street with Central Park. This delivers an enhanced setting for new residential and commercial development under construction
- work has started on the improvements to the High Street including new granite paving, lighting and landscaping
- further phases of work to ease movement into the town centre commenced in 2021. Phase 3 with public realm improvements and dedicated cycle routes along Hythe Street is in the design stage.

These works complement the recent regeneration of the Acacia site, at the northern end of Central Park. The site now has a number of refurbished buildings offering opportunities for the leisure and hospitality offer in the town centre, much improved car parking and significant improvements to the public realm.

CREDIT: GORDON YOUNG, HMY ARCHITECTS

Acacia Hall Coach House, Dartford.

CREDIT: ANDY BARNES

Proposal for Market Street public realm, Dartford.

Residential development immediately north of the town centre is almost complete at the award-winning Langley Square and Phoenix Quarter sites. There is strong developer interest and further sites are expected to be brought forward.

South of the town centre, at Lowfield Street, construction is well underway on the first two phases at 'Copperhouse Green' comprising 1,500m^2 (16,146ft^2) of retail and community space, offices, around 560 new homes overlooking Central Park and a micro-brewery and café facing on to the new public square. The uptake of properties for sale encouraged Bellway to put forward proposals to continue the regeneration of the east of Lowfield Street. This will extend development to around 700 homes in total and support the continued rejuvenation of town centre.

Economy

Strong economic development interest in Dartford was highlighted by plans for a state-of-the-art distribution facility for Amazon, with floorspace in excess of 200,000m^2 (2,152,782ft^2), on the former Littlebrook Power Station. Work on site commenced in June 2020 with handover to Amazon in July 2021.

The supply and take-up of new business and industrial premises is still growing rapidly. Major new units have been recently completed at key locations such as The Bridge and Questor Industrial Estate and construction activity continues for additional space at Crossways, The Bridge and Littlebrook.

Opportunities in the Borough are assisted by an up-to-date Local Plan guiding development, maintaining a consistent future 5-year housing land supply and a well-developed Infrastructure Plan. A new Local Plan is likely to be submitted for consideration by the Planning Inspectorate late in 2021. Funding mechanisms, including CIL, are in place to bring forward the infrastructure required to support new development.

For further information:
www.c2ecampaign.com
www.discoverdartford.co.uk

London Resort

London Resort Company Holdings (LRCH) is proposing to develop a world-class, sustainable, next generation entertainment resort known as the 'London Resort', on the banks of the River Thames. The first theme park 'gate' will open in 2024 and the second by 2029 at Swanscombe Peninsula in North Kent, set over 465 hectares (1,150acres).

It is the first commercial project to be designated as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project. A Development Consent Order application has been made to obtain planning permission, to be determined by the Planning Inspectorate.

Gravesham

Located at the heart of the Thames Estuary growth area, Gravesham is to benefit from major infrastructure, leisure and regeneration projects in advanced stages of planning and to be delivered over the next 5 years and beyond. Over the past year, planned developments have been committed to and significant new schemes proposed; a further 1500 homes for Gravesend's riverside canal basin with a mix of commercial space. It includes 23,970m^2 (258,000ft^2) of light industrial/warehousing located in the rural area east of Gravesend.

The Borough is seeking to tap into the shift to remote working and the '15-minute' city concept, the inspiration for London-based developer Joseph Homes' Albion Waterside scheme in Gravesend.

High Speed One rail services direct to Kings Cross/St Pancras in 23 minutes and Stratford in 17 minutes, further boost the location for Kent's closest town to London by journey time – comparable to Underground Zones Three and Four. Crossrail services (Elizabeth Line) to Abbey Wood are expected to open in 2022 and proposals to extend Crossrail to neighbouring Ebbsfleet are also being consulted on.

Town Centre Place Making

Gravesham Borough Council and its development partner Reef Group continue to deliver a major mixed-use transformation of Gravesend town centre. The masterplan is phased over a number of years and will deliver 102,193m^2 (1,100,000ft^2) of new space. The Charter is the first phase

Infrastructure and Regeneration
Continued

and is currently being built out. Overlooking the Thames, the scheme of 242 new homes will provide design-led apartment living, responsive to the emerging home working market. An improved network of routes and spaces integrate it with the town and riverside.

After a final phase of refurbishment and improvement works at the St George's Shopping Centre, a £0.5m Arts & Creative Hub was supported by government's Getting Building Fund. This will bring forward 325m^2 (3,500ft^2) of flexible gallery and co-working space overlooking a public square.

Quinn Estates gained permission for Clifton Slipways in July, a contemporary mixed-use project on West Street, Gravesend which promises to ensure long-awaited riverside regeneration becomes a reality. It is intended to act as a catalyst for further town centre investment. The scheme comprises 227 riverside apartments and nearby West Street Pier will be refurbished to create Pier Works, a start-up business hub and café overlooking the Thames.

Commercial Space
Whitehall Place opened in central Gravesend this year, providing 836m^2 (9,000ft^2) of high specification serviced offices within the refurbished former Customs House on the Thames. After limited new stock in recent years, this flexible space is anticipated to capitalise on the trend towards distributed local workspaces and accelerated start-up activity as well as anchor tenants.

New-build light industrial stock at Northfleet is in the advanced planning stage as a joint venture between the Council and Ebbsfleet Development Corporation on land west of Gravesend. It is expected to provide 3252m^2 (35,000ft^2) of flexible business units in a range of sizes for small and medium-sized businesses.

Nuralite Business Park, Higham is a long-established rural business location which has permission for 23,970m^2 (258,000ft^2) of light industrial/warehousing to be progressed in phases and available for occupation from 2022.

Albion Waterside, Gravesend
A new Thameside neighbourhood is in the advanced stages of a hybrid planning approval. The development is from Joseph Homes in collaboration with a design team including JTP architects and Beispiel, consultants for the non-residential space activation. It will deliver 1,500 new homes to ambitious LiveWell standards as well as 4,500m^2 (48,438ft^2) of commercial space, generate 172 permanent jobs and an estimated £4-6.5m in GVA. Two thirds will be open space and biodiversity will be sustained and improved by a series of public gardens around the re-instated canal east of the adjacent harbour basin.

The commercial element builds on Kent's food and drink heritage. It is envisaged Albion Waterside will host shops,

CREDIT: JTP ARCHITECTS

Proposal for Albion Waterside, Gravesend.

restaurants and production space to support local industry. Clustered around food production, the units are designed for small-scale craft or production businesses. Chocolatiers, small batch brewers, distillers, cheese makers can combine back of house production, retail frontages, servicing and logistics, within the heart of the development. A critical mass of small food businesses will create a network of mutual support, complementing the town's market and serving the Kent food network.

CREDIT: BPTW ARCHITECTS

Proposal for older living housing, Valley Drive, Gravesend.

Older Living

As one of the largest providers of housing in Gravesham, the Council plays an important role in shaping the local market and supporting place making. With an ageing population, schemes for older living are being brought forward to encourage downsizing and the release of larger family homes onto the market. A scheme of 48, 100% affordable 'age-friendly' homes are under construction at Valley Drive, Gravesend. The scheme has 32 sheltered, independent living flats in a cloister form and 16, one and two bed homes. It was shortlisted for the 2020 Housing Design Awards, for housing suited to older living and design quality reflecting the Kent vernacular. A similar scheme of 17 homes, 'St Hilda's' has also been completed at Pankhurst Place, Gravesend.

For further information:

Economic.development@gravesham.gov.uk

Maidstone

Maidstone as the county town has excellent rail and road networks offering access to London or the continent. The local economy continues to grow alongside the investment in infrastructure and amenities and Maidstone Borough Council continue to invest in the borough. The building of the new Innovation Centre and recent purchase of the Lockmeadow leisure complex, with supporting public realm works such as the £1.3m bus station enhancements showcase Maidstone as the ever-popular place to live and work.

Maidstone Innovation Centre

Located on Kent Medical Campus, Junction 7 of the M20, the Council's £14.5m flagship project (part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund) completed in October. It is receiving strong interest from life science, healthcare and med-tech sectors with several tenants moved in. Harrisons Chartered Surveyors have been instructed to take it to the market. The Innovation Centre provides 3,437m^2 (37,000ft^2) of flexible office space, co-working, virtual offices, meeting room hire, and conference facilities.

CREDIT: CAXTONS

Maidstone Innovation Centre.

Infrastructure and Regeneration
Continued

It includes tailored business support with the South East Innovation Programme (SE-IP). Managed for the Council by NCL Technology Ventures, SE-IP is already helping to secure £21m of funding to develop treatments for autoimmune disease sufferers. The building provides a 'high spec' environment and collaborative space for businesses to grow and prosper including green energy/electric car charging. It is expected to support 270 jobs and generate a further £120m of additional GVA to the local economy over the next 10 years.
www.maidstoneinnovationcentre.co.uk

Loc8 Maidstone's premier commercial park
Following Clearbell Property Partners acquisition of a 13.35ha (33acres) greenfield site in Maidstone for £5m in 2019, planning for a business park was secured in March 2021. The first phase of Clearbell's development will see warehouse units completed by August and September 2022, ranging from 465 to 9,290m^2 (5,000 to 100,000ft^2) buildings. The £47m scheme provides 45,430m^2 (489,000ft^2) of mixed-use space for local businesses and hundreds of job opportunities. Clearbell begin construction of site infrastructure and landscaping this year. The site, just off Junction 8 of the M20 is within easy reach of London and the South East. Clearbell purchased the site as part of its portfolio of multi-let industrial (MLI) assets, to meet increasing demand for industrial and logistics in a supply-constrained market. Once constructed, the larger buildings will be carbon neutral, while the site will also provide 17ha (42acres) of new habitat, nearly 12,000 trees, six wildlife ponds and electric vehicle charging for cars and commercial vehicles.
www.loc8maidstone.co.uk

Town centre
Lockmeadow Leisure Complex
The Council secured the head lease of the Lockmeadow Leisure Complex in 2019. Refurbishment to improve the visibility and appearance of the complex is now complete, giving it a more modern look, enhancing the surroundings and linking it to the adjoining Medway riverside. This included a new food hall in the summer for fresh, high quality food available quickly. Lockmeadow is a leisure centre with an Odeon multiplex cinema, 18-lane bowling alley, a trampoline park, restaurants and a two-level David Lloyd swimming pool and gym complex.
www.lockmeadowentertainment.co.uk

Bus station improvements
A £1.3m improvement programme is near completion transforming Maidstone Bus Station into a light, airy and attractive place for bus users. Located under The Mall shopping centre this includes opening up the concourses to provide more light, a new lighting system designed to make the station safer and brighter, a new colour scheme, new flooring to the concourses and new entrance signage.

CREDIT: MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Proposal for Loc8, logistics and office park,Maidstone.

Mote Park Café
Maidstone's stunning 178ha (440acre) Mote Park will have a new café with indoor and outdoor seating and new, larger modern toilet building (and changing places facility for people with limited physical capacity) for the many visitors to the park. It will have a flexible space for learning, meetings and for community groups to hire. The Council is leading the work carried out by BBS Construction Ltd starting in the autumn.

Maidstone East
The upgrade to Maidstone East station is complete. Network Rail, Southeastern Railways, Kent County Council and Maidstone Borough Council worked together to transform this gateway site. Improved cycle parking facilities encourage rail commuters to incorporate cycling into their journey. Additional cycle spaces have been installed as part of a new cycle hub with CCTV, lighting and repair stands. The £2.6m project will provide a larger, more spacious entrance and concourse with a new waiting room, café, ticket office and staff room. A statue of an Iguanodon dinosaur (discovered locally in 1822) has been installed on the forecourt by the Council along with flowers and shrubs in the new forecourt area.

Springfield Mill
The Council exchanged contracts with Redrow Homes for the purchase of 14 apartments located within Block 9, Springfield Mill, in the Royal Engineers Road development. Works to Block 9 were completed in June and the scheme provides for 2 one-bed and 12 two-bed apartments, all for private rent on the open market and now fully occupied.

King Street
The Council is proposing a low-carbon, energy-efficient housing development on this site identified in the Local Plan. The Council is working with ZED PODS to investigate a proposed redevelopment at King Street for 16 homes which would be built over the current car park. The proposed new homes will consist of a mix of one and two-bed apartments with six as social rented.

For further information:
John Foster 01622 602394; johnfoster@maidstone.gov.uk
www.maidstone.gov.uk/home/primary-services/business-and-investment/primary-areas/regeneration/tier-3-primary-areas/housing-projects

Medway

Innovation Park Medway (IPM)
This will offer 100,000m^2 (over a million ft^2) of high quality, innovative commercial space in a prime location near Junction 3 of the M2. It will attract high value, knowledge-intensive businesses looking to grow and benefit from access to world-class research and development and highly skilled talent through the cluster of Kent and Medway based universities.

Medway Council and Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council have also adopted Local Development Orders (LDOs) which offer streamlined planning for businesses that locate to the site.

Medway Council undertook enabling infrastructure works from mid-2021, maximising the Enterprise Zone (EZ) opportunity to reinvest business rates into the IPM site for 25 years. This will accelerate delivery of high GVA jobs. The Council will actively market the site during construction, which will attract companies looking to self-build custom premises, subject to site design code compliance but made easier through the LDO process.
For expressions of interest:
ipm@harrisons.property.

Medway Development Company
Medway Council has ambitious plans to regenerate and revitalise urban areas and has created Medway Development Company Ltd. (MDC) to deliver high quality developments and support its regeneration initiatives. The MDC projects continue to progress:

Chatham Waterfront
This high-quality, mixed-use development at the Chatham Waterfront site will act as a driver for further regeneration in the area. The focus has been to deliver an exemplar scheme and plans include 175 new homes, new commercial spaces for cafes, restaurants, and offices alongside a new public realm to create a vibrant centre for Chatham. The works are progressing on site following completion of enabling works.

White Road
This completed project delivered twenty family homes with a modern innovative design and using the latest modular construction techniques. The objective was to create high quality affordable homes that exceed statutory requirements, maximise light and provide spacious rooms which surpass national space standards. The project has also delivered enhancements to the adjacent Community Centre and tree planting to the school playing field behind the site. The project has transformed an area which has suffered from antisocial behaviour into a high-quality residential scheme.

CREDIT: LYALL BILLIS & YOUNG AND C.F. MØLLER ARCHITECTS

Proposal for remodelling of Mountbatten House, Chatham.

Whiffens Avenue
Planning permission has been granted to develop 115 new homes on Whiffens Avenue in front of the historic escarpment of the Great Lines Heritage Park. The development has a contemporary design sympathetic to the character of the surrounding area. The adjacent Fort Amherst concealed by vegetation will be uncovered to reveal historic features. The scheme will also lead to significant improvements to the adjacent Town Hall Gardens and the Military Road area opposite the Brook Theatre. This scheme is under construction and expected to complete in the spring of 2022.

Infrastructure and Regeneration
Continued

Britton Farm – Kent and Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust (KMPT)
MDC was commissioned by the Council to project manage the conversion of an empty supermarket to new office accommodation. The scheme was completed in May and KMPT are now operational within the refurbished building, an example of two public sector organisations working in collaboration under the One Public Estate programme, which provided feasibility funding to review viability. The conversion will accommodate 150 employees, allowing the NHS to vacate two other buildings. KMPT's presence in Gillingham will increase footfall for the High Street and positively impact local businesses.

Following the award of £1.99m Getting Building Fund investment in 2020, KMPT's offices will be joined by a Skills and Employability Hub, run by Medway Adult Education.

Britton Farm Residential
Britton Farm will provide 44 new homes with a modern and spacious design. Demolition has been completed and MDC are preparing to start the main construction phase.

Mountbatten House
MDC have coordinated an application to develop Mountbatten House into high quality residential apartments and commercial spaces. This scheme brings an empty building back into use, creating homes in the town centre and supporting the local economy. Planning permission was granted earlier in 2021.

Chatham Waters
The £650m Chatham Waters development is situated in a unique waterfront location, on the site of the former naval dockyard. Boasting unparalleled views across the Medway

CREDIT: COUNTRYSIDE/ANDREW HENDRY

Rochester Riverside.

Estuary, the Peel L&P regeneration scheme is only a 40-minute train journey into Central London.

Over the last five years, Peel L&P have invested over £50m into the first few phases of development at Chatham Waters with a further £600m investment in the pipeline.

Consisting of residential, commercial, retail, leisure, and education, the dynamic 10.5ha (26 acre) destination is already home to a University Technical College, Marston's family restaurant, Asda Superstore, and extensive public realm. To date, approximately 500 new full-time jobs have been created at Chatham Waters

Working with Medway Council, Peel L&P have created a masterplan to ensure that the regeneration of this former brownfield site delivers a truly inspirational new destination that not only complements but enhances the surrounding area. The new development will form part of Natural England's Coastal Pathways scheme, opening up the waterfront of Chatham Waters for a public walkway and nature trail. Works will soon begin on further public realm for people to relax, socialise and unwind.

The scheme has the potential to deliver circa 177,000m^2 (1.9 million ft^2) of floorspace which is similar to the scale of Peel L&P's MediaCityUK development in Salford.

Medway Council
Rochester Riverside
Following the start of construction in 2018, Rochester Riverside, Countryside and Hyde's £419m regeneration

scheme on the banks of the River Medway is making swift progress, with the first residents having moved in during June 2019. A previously brownfield site, this exciting new riverside destination will provide 1,400 new homes, with 25% affordable, when fully complete in 2030. With the marketing suite, show apartment and two show homes now established, sales are progressing strongly on the remaining homes in the first phases of the development. Rochester Riverside is also providing a wealth of community facilities, including a new primary school, retail space, a hotel and over ten acres of green, open space, helping to create a sustainable community at this landmark new development. These amenities are progressing quickly, with the new Travelodge hotel now open and the first commercial units occupied. The newly regenerated Salt Marsh Creek is now open to the public, while construction on the Rochester Riverside primary school began in the summer of 2021 with planned opening in September 2022.

Housing Infrastructure Fund

Progress in the development of proposals for Medway Council's Housing Infrastructure Fund continues. The £170m funding secured will enable the council to forward fund the physical transport and environmental infrastructure required to unlock potential new development on the Hoo Peninsula of 10,600 homes by 2037.

The HIF proposals are an important opportunity for Medway. It will ensure a well-managed programme of works to provide the infrastructure needed to accommodate Medway's growing population and economy, and which supports the government's housing targets.

The ambitious plans include major improvements to highways and new roads, a new train station and passenger service to London, that will provide an alternative mode of transport and access point on and off the peninsula, and proposals to create many new open spaces and areas for leisure, with new interconnecting walkways and cycle paths to residential, transportation and commercial hubs.

For more information about the HIF project and this important opportunity for Medway visit:
medway.gov.uk/futurehoo

Swale

Despite uncertainty presented by the pandemic, there has been evidence of some economic resilience in the Borough, with development projects coming forward, alongside significant milestones reached in delivering long-standing, supportive infrastructure projects.

After delays to the public inquiry (arising from the pandemic) in June, the Secretary of State for Transport approved proposals to improve Junction 5 of the M2 (Stockbury Interchange). The long-awaited package of improvements, including a new north-south flyover, will provide the A249 with free-flowing movement, improved travel times and enhanced road safety.

Progress has also been made in respect of the planned improvements to key junctions along the A249, at Key Street and Grovehurst. The funding package of over £38m has been secured through the Housing Infrastructure Fund and Kent County Council will be looking to secure planning permission for the scheme in 2021, with contracts to be let thereafter. This will help enable committed development. In particular the Grovehurst Junction serves a substantial number of businesses located on the major business parks in Sittingbourne including Eurolink and Kemsley Fields.

The Eurolink Business Park, Sittingbourne continues to be a focus for industrial investment and Phase 5 has seen take up and development of the remaining plots, with a number of

CREDIT: RICHARD BAILEY, C&W ARCHITECTS

The Hub at Kent Science Park, Sittingbourne.

Infrastructure and Regeneration
Continued

significant owner-occupiers now operating from bespoke facilities. Speculative development has also continued at Trilogy Sittingbourne, a new logistics and industrial development with units of between 1,022m^2 (11,000ft^2) and 7,804m^2 (84,000ft^2). The developers are aiming to have the units available from Quarter 3 this year.

Whilst not without challenges for the Borough, Swale continues to attract proposals for energy generation. The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy granted a development consent order in February 2021 for the Wheelabrator Kemsley K3 Generating Station. The station will have a generating capacity of 75MW by processing up to 657,000 tonnes of non-recyclable waste each year.

The Spirit of Sittingbourne scheme reached an important milestone in Sittingbourne town centre this year, with the opening of The Light Cinema in May. The new leisure attraction provides an eight-screen cinema, a nine-lane bowling alley, retro arcade and restaurant. Sentado Lounge Café and Bar opened in October and there are plans for further restaurants to open in the near future. This latest phase is the culmination of the wider Sittingbourne Town Centre regeneration project, which included a fully let retail park, delivered as part of Phase 1 in 2018, a new multi-storey car park in September 2019 and a new Travelodge which opened in March 2020.

Major mixed-use developments in Faversham are also well underway, at Perry Court and at Love Lane, with housing now being built and marketed. Aldi have also opened a new store and Premier Inn are planning to open an 84-bed hotel at Perry Court in autumn 2021.

After successfully applying for £300,000 from the government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme earlier this year, Swale Borough Council has committed a further £1.3m to refurbish Master's House in Sheerness. The Council's proposals include three workshops, nine office suites, 3 meeting/conference spaces, large function hall, kitchen and a breakout space. The project is planned to be completed by this autumn.

Peel Ports London Medway welcomed a new freight-only ferry service to their Sheerness Port in July which provides a new connection to Calais. The Maxine, operated by DFDS, has one daily sailing in each direction between the two ports and can carry up to 165 unaccompanied freight units.

Work has begun on the Sheerness Dockyard Preservation Trust's project to restore the Grade 2* listed Dockyard Church. The £7.98m project has been made possible through funding from The Heritage Lottery Fund and from some of the UK's leading philanthropic trusts, foundations, and individuals. Work has begun to rebuild the high parapet according to the original 1820s design. Once complete in Autumn 2022, the project will deliver a new enterprise centre, community hub, heritage space and events room.

Homes England and Swale Borough Council have continued to progress the Queenborough and Rushenden Regeneration Project, which has benefited from an injection of £5.1m from the Housing Infrastructure Fund. The first phase of 100 homes is complete and contractors have also raised the land for phases two and three above sea level to enable completion of the project. Work began during the last year to decontaminate land for the fourth and final phase of the project.

For further information:
www.swalemeansbusiness.co.uk

CREDIT: SWALE BOROUGH COUNCIL

New Travelodge and Sentado Lounge, part of the Spirit of Sittingbourne scheme.

West Kent

Sevenoaks

Sevenoaks is a positive place for business with a council committed to supporting the commercial sector. The District provides an environment where start-up survival rates are high and a choice of business property with co-working spaces in town centre and rural locations. Thanks to a partnership of landowners and the Council, Sevenoaks is set to benefit from significant new commercial space in the near future.

Sevenoaks is one of the very best-connected areas in the country. With the M25 and M20 motorways and extensive rail lines, you can reach the capital in less than 30 minutes with seaports and airports also within easy reach. It is home to some of the best schools in the country and is fortunate to have a highly trained and educated local workforce. The area offers work-life balance and is increasingly becoming the choice for those who want an attractive and desirable place to live and work or invest.

Sevenoaks District Council is a multi-award winning council, having previously won the Guardian Public Service Award and numerous sector awards. Within local government, Sevenoaks is known as the first financially self-sufficient council in the country. The Council pioneered the 10-year budget and a successful property investment strategy, which aims to stimulate development and regeneration.

Swanley

Swanley is currently an area of focus for the Council. The town is just 26 minutes from London Victoria by rail and next to Junction 3 of the M25. The Council recently started work on a business hub network, providing co-working space and support to entrepreneurs – all a short walk from the station. The development has electric vehicle charging points, energy-saving air source heating, cycle facilities and a wildlife-friendly garden. New homes are included in the development, which forms part of the wider plans to regenerate the important gateway to the town.

The business hub network will be supported by an innovative online platform which will offer expert business support and advice, training and skills and leading industry research.

CREDIT: DARCSTUDIOS

Proposal for the new Swanley work hub and homes currently under construction.

These premises will deliver a 'gym-style' membership of flexible work space, a mix of desk hire, meeting rooms and collaborative working areas. It will benefit business start-ups and self-employed to establish a base and larger businesses seeking regional hubs for homeworking staff to meet regularly. This initiative is in recognition of the trend towards more flexible and hybridised working.

Another major project is a new, £20m state-of-the art Swanley leisure centre, which will open in January 2022. Swanley's renovated train station also opened in 2021, part-funded by money secured by the Council.

Sevenoaks

The Council is currently leading on plans to regenerate Sevenoaks town centre. In 2021, permission was granted to redevelop the former Tesco site in the High Street. The £40m investment will bring nearly a thousand square metres of retail and commercial space, improved public areas and much needed housing. Plans are being drawn up for further regeneration of the area east of the High Street to provide more business space, public facilities and new homes.

Planning permission, subject to a legal agreement, has also been approved to redevelop part of the historic Fort Halstead site just outside Sevenoaks. This large-scale application includes nearly 28,000m^2 (301,390ft^2) of business space including a new mixed-use village and up to 635 new homes.

For further information:
Economic Development and Property Team
www.business@sevenoaks.gov.uk

Infrastructure and Regeneration
Continued

Tonbridge and Malling
Supporting sustainable economic growth that benefits all is a key component of the borough's recovery plans and future vision. In January, the Borough Council adopted an Economic Recovery Strategy 2021-2023 that sets out a vision and a range of actions after a sustained period of challenge. Actions proposed over the next couple of years include:

- supporting town centres and helping independent retailers
- measures to help support people into employment
- promotion of the borough
- business support and finance
- enabling the delivery of key strategic investment projects.

Strategic sites
Work is now well underway at the East Malling Research Station to completely transform the scientific research facilities and strengthen the competitiveness of the UK horticulture, food and drink industries. The project is being led by NIAB EMR, with the backing of the East Malling Trust. The new Advanced Horticultural Technology Zone will include new science buildings, state-of-the-art glasshouses, energy facilities and related infrastructure. Funding has been secured from government's 'Strength in Places' Fund, complemented by a matching contribution from the East Malling Trust along with Local Growth Funding/ Growing Places Funding via the South East Local Enterprise Partnership.

Top logistics developer, Pannatoni secured permission for up to 176,515m^2 (1,900,000ft^2) of flexible Grade A industrial and logistics space at the former Aylesford Newsprint site in April. Pannatoni Park Aylesford is a 36ha (90acre) site, close to Junction 4 of the M20, and is a £180m investment in high quality, sustainable industrial development, infrastructure, parking, landscaping and access, including a new £7m link road. The development is expected to be completed by 2024 and will create around 3,000 local job opportunities.

CREDIT: TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

Mill Yard, West Malling.

Work commenced in May on the new Tonbridge Trade Park, a £20m investment which will deliver around 9,290m^2 (100,000ft^2) of modern industrial space. It is a joint venture between Chancerygate and Hines to be completed by the end of 2021.

Borough Green Gardens comprises up to 3000 new homes, and will deliver other benefits including jobs, attractive green space, a relief road for the existing village, cycle routes and public transport improvements as well as new schools and community facilities. Part of the national Garden Communities Programme the site will be delivered with a considered approach to design, layout and landscape setting to meet the government's garden community principles. Work has been ongoing over the last 18 months. Lead consultants have been appointed for the development brief to provide a detailed framework to support delivery and will include a vision, objectives, constraints, opportunities and expectations. It is anticipated that the Borough Council will formally consult on the draft brief later in 2021 to be adopted alongside a new Local Plan in due course.

Town centres
The Borough Council is nearing completion of its Shopfront Improvement Scheme which has seen over 30 projects. Grants of up to £5,000 per shop unit have been allocated to support retailers to carry out improvement works to premises. A key project was Mill Yard in West Malling, which received a grant of £10,500 across a number of units to support new signage, branding and frontage improvements.

Infrastructure
Over the years, the Borough has benefited from a wide range of key infrastructure investments which includes motorways and A-roads, improvements to rural broadband provision and flood mitigation measures. Supported through DEFRA, the Local Growth Fund and other partnership funding, work on increasing the capacity of the Leigh Flood Storage Area and Hildenborough Embankment Scheme remains on course. In early 2021, the Environment Agency secured permission for the works and are also progressing Ministry approval to increase the maximum stored water level. An application will be submitted for the Hildenborough works later in the year. These works are currently scheduled to complete in autumn 2023, subject to approvals.

Kings Hill
Kings Hill is a long-established major flagship business park and residential community led by a partnership between

CREDIT: PROLOGIS

Proposal for housing by Anchor, Kings Hill.

Liberty/Prologis and Kent County Council. The residential element continues to expand and evolve with a further major suite of residential land sales of Phase 3 and Phase 5 to Bellway Homes. In changes to the commercial holdings Kent County Council has increased its freehold ownership investment in office space at Kings Hill.

With climate change at the top of the agenda, the County Council is looking at the most effective methods to achieve low carbon, and where possible, neutral energy sourcing, for its own substantial property portfolio. Roof top solar panels have been installed successfully on several of its Kings Hill properties in recent years. The objective is to see a significant and stepped increase in solar energy use at Kings Hill, to fully embrace carbon reduction potential and improve the identity of Kings Hill as a 'low carbon' business park.

Tunbridge Wells

Local plan

A pre-submission Local Plan for Tunbridge Wells Borough was published in March for Regulation 19 consultation and can be viewed on the Council's website: www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/planning/planning-policy/local-plan/pre-submission-local-plan

The Local Plan sets out the Council's proposed strategy and related site allocations up to 2038. The level of housing to meet the government's prescribed housing need target, includes proposals for Paddock Wood and through a new settlement at Tudeley near Capel, as well as additional capacity in Royal Tunbridge Wells. A series of evidence-based documents on housing and employment needs and supply and infrastructure requirements, has informed the Plan and are also on the website. The Council is reviewing representations received in the Regulation 19 consultation, after which the plan will be submitted in the autumn to the Planning Inspectorate.

Projects in Royal Tunbridge Wells

The Amelia Scott

Work on The Amelia Scott, the Council's new facility housing a range of arts, heritage, culture and well-being services, has proceeded apace and is now nearing completion ready for fit out. It will showcase national heritage collections, host exhibitions, provide a place where people can learn about the town and borough. An estimated 400,000 people will use the building annually, a real economic boost to the town centre and local businesses and it is due to open in spring 2022.

Town Hall

The Borough Council is seeking a partner to deliver co-working space in the Town Hall building. Embracing agile working, the Council is seeking to release 1,858m^2 (20,000ft^2) of office space for business use and a shared approach to major meeting space including the Council Chamber. The Council wants to build on the strong creative sector and the wider business base by working with an experienced provider of co-working space to deliver a creative offer more appropriate to the market. Invitations to Tender went out in September with a preferred partner being selected by the end of the year. It is to be operational by mid-2022.

1887 The Pantiles

This residential development was completed this summer with a high take up of sales and occupations of units. Developers, Dandara, are looking to agree terms on one of the commercial units and have been marketing another with potential for a restaurant use.

Kingstanding Way

In 2020, permission was granted for new business floorspace at North Farm. The development is set to create up to 74,000m^2 (796,520ft^2) of business floorspace and nearly 4,000 direct and 2,000 indirect jobs, with an expected GVA per annum of £275.7m locally and £307.8m in the wider area. The developers U+I will shortly be publishing material in targeted media for future partners to bring the development

CREDIT: DANDARA/TUNBRIDGE WELLS BOROUGH COUNCIL

1887 The Pantiles, Tunbridge Wells.

Infrastructure and Regeneration
Continued

forward. Work is also continuing in relation to the planning conditions and reserved matters.

Hollyfields, Hawkenbury
Berkeley Homes continue to build 243 homes with nearly 50 homes already occupied. The new primary school, St Peter's CEP is now fully open.

Projects across the Borough
Southborough Hub
Southborough Hub was completed in March and developers Baxall have handed the building back to Southborough Town Council. A library opened in May, the GP surgery in June, with the pharmacy and football pavilion due very soon. Occupations in the Crest housing scheme on the same site, have also started. Public realm improvements have been completed and there is increased on-site parking.

Paddock Wood Residential Development
Homes are being built across three major sites in Paddock Wood:

Mascalls Farm, Berkeley Homes: Phase 1 is currently under construction with the first occupations due in Summer 2021. Planning permission was granted in March for 100 additional homes as Phase 2.

Mascalls Court Farm, Persimmon Homes: Phase 1 comprising 175 homes is under construction, with 155 homes occupied. Detailed permission was granted in June for Phases 2 and 3 for 200 further homes.

Church Farm, Countryside Properties: Detailed permission was granted in July for Phase 1 comprising 300 homes. Work began on site in February. An application for Phase 2 comprising 60 homes is currently under consideration.

CREDIT: LICHFIELDS

Proposal for the Kingstanding Way development, Tunbridge Wells.

East Kent

Ashford

As the commercial property market returns after the pandemic, Ashford is in a strong position to recover and reap the benefits from a post-pandemic world. Ashford remains an important commercial location driven by key developments:

- co-working and start-up office space for BizSpace opened in July
- 140-bed Hampton by Hilton hotel welcoming guests from August
- green light given for a distribution centre at Waterbrook.

Town centre

At 1,257m^2 (13,530ft^2), the Jasmin Vardimon Dance Academy is one of Kent's largest cultural infrastructure projects. It is on the Henwood Industrial Estate and will form the centre of a major new arts hub with a number of light industrial units, in total 3,453m^2 (37,168ft^2), to attract creative businesses to the area.

The Coachworks, opposite Ashford International Station is a collaboration with Turner.Works to transform disused industrial buildings into a mixed-use campus providing co-working space for start-ups and smaller companies, flexible event space and a food and drink destination. Across the railway line, the Curious Brewery and visitor centre, now under new ownership, is a focal point for an increasingly strong tourism offer.

The Council supported the delivery of Elwick Place, a flagship leisure venue with a 900 seat Picturehouse cinema and 58-bed Travelodge. Nearly all of the units are let to independent food and drink outlets and it contributes to renewed confidence within the high street alongside several other new retail faces. The Council's Town Centre Reset document presents further opportunities for investment.

McArthurGlen's 9,290m² (100,000ft²) expansion of Ashford Designer Outlet, has added 50 new stores and allowed it to increase revenue and now become the best performing McArthur Outlet in Europe.

Nearby, on the former Newtown railway works, permission has been given for Ashford International Film Studios.

CREDIT: STONEHOUSE DEVELOPMENTS

Proposal for Infinity Ashford rooftop restaurant/bar and café at the new residential development.

The scheme, by Quinn Estates in partnership with The Creative District Improvement Company and Time + Space Studios will see the creation of 6,968m^2 (75,000ft^2) of TV and film studio space, likely to attract national and international companies.

Infinity Ashford, a landmark high quality residential development on a prominent brownfield site in Ashford opposite the international railway station has received permission. The scheme comprises four main buildings plus townhouses fronting the River Stour. The 16-storey mixed-use development comprises 214 apartments and nine townhouses, with secure parking for 200 vehicles. The design for Infinity Ashford, by Canterbury-based ON Architecture features a rooftop restaurant/bar, café and commercial space, and an attractive elevated landscaped courtyard set in the middle of the buildings.

Infrastructure and sites

Digital connectivity and investment is at the heart of the borough's economic focus. 5G is live in Ashford town centre, while Netomnia and Openreach are investing to bring Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) to between 30,000 and 50,000 premises in Ashford. Openreach are upgrading Tenterden to FTTP under their Fibre First programme.

The delivery of Junction 10a of the M20, provides substantial opportunity for increased commercial and residential property development through the Waterbrook and Finberry developments. The 11ha (27acre) site will have an Inland Border Facility providing customs clearance for goods arriving from abroad and planning for a distribution centre at Waterbrook has been approved.

Eureka Park, developed by Quadrant Estates at M20 Junction 9, comprises 27,871m² (300,000ft²) over 38ha (94acres) with opportunities for new investment. Helix Property have developed 2,635m² (28,363ft²) of co-working and start-up office space for BizSpace, which opened in July, while there has been strong interest in smaller industrial units at the council owned 4,366m² (47,000ft²) Carlton Road Business Park.

Ashford is 9th on the Property Week Hot Housing Index for 2021, as the residential offer in the town centre continues to evolve with several developments within walking distance of the station on former brownfield sites.

Infrastructure and Regeneration
Continued

CREDIT: BDW

Chilmington Green, Ashford.

Elsewhere in the borough, permission for 725 units at Conningbrook Park, on a masterplanned site including a school, gym, community centre and medical facilities was given last year. Chilmington Green, part of the South Ashford Garden Community, will eventually see 5,750 new homes built. Crest Nicholson continues to develop a mix of family homes at their new village at Finberry near M20 Junction 10.

Canterbury

The last twelve months has proved to be a highly challenging period for Canterbury district's economy and commercial property market. The area has not been immune to the impacts of the pandemic, which has affected the office and retail property markets in particular. Despite this, there are still positives that can be drawn from changing trading and working environments.

While the property sector looks to adapt to a post-pandemic world where the prospects for general office space are less certain, demand for high quality, modern business centres providing flexible office accommodation and support facilities remains strong. Despite higher levels of tenant turnover in 2020 and early 2021 compared to previous years, take up at East Kent Spatial Development Company (EKSDC) owned and managed Clover House (Whitstable) and Canterbury Innovation Centre have now returned to high levels with both reporting occupancy of 90% at June 2021.

In Canterbury, while many well-known high street retail and hospitality brands have seen a number of store closures, a marked recovery has been taking shape. Alongside 25 new businesses which have opened this year there has been interest in further retail units with some under offer or some seeking changes to properties to allow other commercial uses. Outlets have also used the last twelve months to repurpose, revamp and make other modifications to adapt to a changing trading environment.

An important part of the city's commercial recovery has been led by the food and drink sector along with the leisure and hotel industries. Two key Canterbury regeneration projects are helping to drive this recovery.

The £115m Riverside Development is located in the Kingsmead area, North East of the city centre. Construction of this mixed-use leisure led development, anchored by a five screen Curzon cinema, has continued apace throughout the last year – despite the well documented challenges the construction sector has faced. The commercial and student accommodation elements of the scheme are due for practical completion at the end of the summer/early autumn, with the latter delivered using modular methods of construction. The two residential sites, comprising a total of 189 homes, have been handed over to the Hyde Group's contractor, Jenners. Leasing of the commercial units is well underway with an encouraging amount of interest and engagement from the market with six of the twelve commercial units under offer.

Secondly, the former Slatters Hotel site in the city centre, has been transformed into a new 129-bed Hampton by Hilton hotel incorporating two listed buildings and a glass panel in the reception area showcasing the remains of a Roman theatre. The £20m development also boasts a 24-hour fitness centre, meeting rooms, secure offsite parking as well as an onsite, rooftop bar/restaurant allowing visitors to dine above the city. Now open and taking guest bookings the development has brought a renowned hotel brand to one of the UK's most historical cities while re-using buildings and enhancing the street scene.

In addition, two prominent retail units on the Wincheap Estate have recently been let by the Council. A building materials supplier and bathroom retailer have been secured for the two sites left vacant by Homebase and Laura Ashley respectively.

The market for industrial space remains robust locally underscored by ongoing letting activity at Barton Business Park. Three of four new build light industrial/distribution/ warehousing units, each with mezzanine floors have already been taken. Developed by the Fort Knight Group this forms

CREDIT: HOLLAWAY

Hampton by Hilton Hotel, Canterbury.

CREDIT: HMY ARCHITECTS

Proposal for KMMS Student Residences, Canterbury – aerial view of picnic area.

part of a four-block project totalling approximately 3,143m^2 (33,831ft^2) with more blocks in the pipeline.

Close to the University of Kent's Canterbury campus a new development is proposed to provide major student accommodation. At Giles Lane the 935-bed purpose-built accommodation is set to be arranged in 5 blocks, ranging from 3 to 6 storeys. Other new amenities include new sports facilities, highway and other transport improvements and green infrastructure.

Finally, to plan for land use needs up to 2040, Canterbury City Council is to review its Local Plan. Over the last year it has held a series of conferences/consultation events with residents and property and land-based stakeholders. It is now consulting on a vision for the future of the district, setting out options for growth and development. The review also included two 'Call for Sites' exercises asking landowners/developers to propose potential locations for development and other land uses to meet future economic need.

Dover

Just 21 miles from mainland Europe, Dover is a vital international gateway and is the busiest roll-on roll-off ferry port in Europe. Ferry services operate to Calais and Dunkirk, and Dover is also a major port of call for cruise lines. Combine this with excellent links to central London, just an hour away by High Speed One, Dover is superbly connected for doing business. Dover is looking to the future with a range of major investments and regeneration projects.

Port of Dover

In June 2021 the Port of Dover opened 'Clock Tower Square', the latest phase of the redevelopment of Dover's Western Docks. Part of a new marina and waterfront development, the 1,000m^2 (10,764ft^2) site combines fresh design with artefacts from Dover's history to create a contemporary site that's perfect for relaxing and appreciating local culture.

Freight transport continues to be a major driver of new investment as Dover retains its dominance as the closest link for goods between the UK and Europe. The Port of Dover remained open for vital trade throughout the pandemic.

The Dover Cargo Terminal at the Western Docks is complete with an eight chamber temperature controlled warehouse in operation. All stages of the operation including storage, container stripping and distribution can now be conducted at a set temperature. This is a huge development for logistics and cargo customers. At the Eastern Docks ferry terminal, Irish Ferries has joined the premier Dover to Calais route, whilst DFDS has introduced the longest ever ferry to operate from the port, the 214m long Côte D'Opale. P&O Ferries are constructing two revolutionary new double-ended ferries due to enter service in 2023. With two impressive state-of-the-art cruise terminals, Dover has the capacity to accommodate three cruise ships at once. Dover is the second largest cruise port in the UK with 25 different cruise operators.

Open Golf Championship, Sandwich

The 149th Open Golf championship took place in July at the Royal St. George's Golf Course. It is the fifteenth time the iconic course has hosted the world's greatest golfers and brought in around 30,000 visitors per day. With worldwide TV coverage and beautiful weather, millions of viewers

CREDIT: GORDON YOUNG, HMY ARCHITECTS

New Dover Marine Office, Dover Western Docks.

Infrastructure and Regeneration
Continued

around the world witnessed the landscape of the area. The district is home to Kent's 'Golf Coast' with three of the best links golf courses in the world, all of which have hosted The Open – Royal St. George's Golf Club and Princes Golf Club in Sandwich, and the Royal Cinque Ports Golf Club in Deal.

Dover town centre
Dover District Council (DDC) is investing in the future of the town centre. This includes redesigning Dover's Market Square with a £3m project, supported by £2.44m from the Coastal Communities Fund. The square will include a unique misting water feature that will act as a wayfinder and enliven the space, creating a focus for children to play and families to congregate.

A £3.2m award from the Future High Streets Fund and a £1.7m commitment from DDC will deliver two key projects designed to increase footfall and spend locally. A refurbished subway will encourage greater movement between the town centre and waterfront and a new creative centre in Bench Street will enhance the offer of the lower end of the town centre.

A £9.1m restoration of the Grade I Listed Maison Dieu is underway with help from a £4.27m grant from Heritage Lottery Fund. The project will bring redundant spaces back into commercial use, including the Mayor's Parlour as a holiday let and a unique new café in the Victorian gaol cells!

CREDIT: DOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL

Proposal for Market Square, Dover.

In 2024 the Maison Dieu will be open to the public for the first time in its 800-year history as part of the creation of a heritage quarter in the town.

Legal & General's £53m St James Development has a range of top names in retail and leisure. The latest business to take a 418m^2 (4,500ft^2) unit is Rico Sabor, a Kent based tapas restaurant.

DDC's town centre business grant scheme continues awarding businesses up to £10,000 for property refurbishment costs in Dover, Deal and Sandwich. DDC also has a green energy grant scheme where businesses can apply for up to £10,000 for green energy efficiency investments. Grants have been awarded to 52 businesses.

Transport
DDC has been awarded £16.1m from the government's Housing Infrastructure Fund to support a FastTrack bus system to connect Whitfield, Dover town and Dover Priory station. Fastrack buses will have priority on the proposed route to include a new bus, cycle and pedestrian-only bridge across the A2 at Whitfield and dedicated new link road to Guston. Sandwich station was improved for The Open with a new footbridge and extended platform to allow 12-car High Speed One trains.

Tourism Strategy
A tourism strategy for Dover district, marketed as 'White Cliffs Country', was launched in May by the Minister for Sport and Tourism, Nigel Huddlestone MP. This aims to stimulate market growth, employment and investment in the visitor economy.

Discovery Park
Discovery Park in Sandwich is home to over 160 businesses and continues to bring investment as a Life Sciences Opportunity Zone. Recent developments include a new 75-bed Travelodge.The site is now a thriving part of the South East's life science community offering high quality laboratory, office and manufacturing facilities. Pfizer retains a strong presence and recently announced a £10m manufacturing investment to speed development of breakthrough medicines. Around 50% of businesses have expanded at Discovery Park, 80% collaborate together and 20% of on-site jobs are created by the park.

Housing
DDC has begun an ambitious programme to build 500 new homes across the district with 147 affordable homes currently complete, under construction or in planning at six locations. This includes the recent £12.5m development of 65 homes in Harold Street, Dover comprising 24 apartments for social rent, 29 shared ownership apartments and 12 town houses. Each contain a purpose-built work/live space ideal for remote working. Work is well underway at both Aylesham Garden Village and the Whitfield Urban Extension. New 'eco-friendly' homes are being built in Eastry manufactured using a hyper structurally insulated panel system. The 50 homes will achieve an EPC rating above the highest category of A in the UK.

Other developments
The former Leaf Hotel in Whitfield is now officially the Holiday Inn Dover following major remodelling/ refurbishment with a new Bella Italia restaurant. Home Bargains has invested £4m in its new Dover store creating 120 local jobs. Co-op has invested £620,000 in a new store which runs on 100% renewable electricity, forming part of the rejuvenation of the former Buckland Mill site.

For further information:
www.investindover.co.uk

Folkestone & Hythe
The fresh sea air, expansive beaches, green countryside and the arts, culture, food and drink offered by the district are highly attractive, particularly for people re-evaluating their lifestyles due to the pandemic.

The district's popularity continues to soar and it consistently attracts relocators from London and the South East. A successful Triennial run and a slew of articles in the national media make the district one of the most popular destinations in the UK. A highly accessible location, its High Speed One service to London St Pancras in just 53 minutes, and direct connections to Europe via Eurotunnel and access to the M20 and M2 motorways add to its appeal.

Businesses succeed here and find space in hubs, co-working spots and larger commercial spaces. Creative and digital industries, artisans and independent retailers make up a large proportion of businesses here.

CREDIT: HOLLAWAY

The F51 Urban Sports Park in Folkestone is due to open in 2022.

Folkestone Place Plan
Folkestone's new town centre Place Plan sets out the blueprint for how the area will evolve in the future.

The District Council commissioned architecture/urbanism experts We Made That to lead the delivery of this plan, working with partners such as Steer, PRD, Fletcher Priest and the Night Time Industry Association. Following engagement with stakeholders, businesses and residents, the Place Plan details the vision and actions to harness the potential of the town via public spaces, roads, development and bringing new activities to Folkestone.

High Streets Fund
This grant award scheme launched in 2019 to bring forward schemes to improve the district's 11 high streets and drive footfall. To date 43 projects have been approved with awards totalling almost £600,000 with a number of vacant units coming back into use. These have complemented further investments by the council in Folkestone to improve signage, street furniture and the environment.

Developments
FOLCA building, the former Debenhams, Folkestone
This historic building is set for an exciting future and has been renamed Folca after a local competition won by two residents who suggested it should be linked to the ancient name for Folkestone. Following purchase by the Council in 2020 its meanwhile use is by the NHS as a mass vaccination centre. The Council is bringing forward a phased development to create a health centre in phase 1 in partnership with local GP practices who will relocate.

Retaining architectural features, including the original Art Deco and Victorian building façades is a priority and professional advice is being provided by Invicta Architectural. Subject to planning, completion of the first phase is anticipated by 2025. Phase 2 of the project includes commercial, leisure and residential and the programme is expected to start while phase 1 is in operation.

Ship Street
This former gasworks site is positioned between Folkestone Central station and the town centre. It was purchased in March 2021 by the Council as part of wider regeneration and forms part of the Place Plan and was taken to market as part of a testing exercise after acquisition. The Council is now liaising with developers to establish the route forward to de-risk the site and a strategy for delivery. The scheme of around 100 homes will be an exemplar development in design and sustainability, with links to the arts and creative sectors.

Mountfield Road, Romney Marsh Business Hub
This new hub is intended for local enterprises that have outgrown home-based locations or are businesses coming to the area. With 12 permanent offices, break out and meeting rooms, it will accommodate a diverse range of enterprises and support their growth.

Marketing, the result of a joint venture between the Council and the East Kent Spatial Development Company, with support from the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority is expected to start in the autumn ahead of completion at the end of 2021. Grants to support businesses taking space are offered by the Council and will also support the marketing.

Funding has also been agreed and work started on the land opposite. A new road and associated infrastructure is being

Infrastructure and Regeneration
Continued

installed to bring forward this 4ha (10acre) site allocated for employment and due for completion early 2022. This will allow businesses to develop their own units within the established industrial estate at Mountfield Road to create several hundred new jobs. Consultants will be supporting the Council in the marketing and it is expected that plots will be released soon.

Biggins Wood, Cheriton

Caesars Way, Cheriton, is earmarked for a 77-unit residential development to include a mix of market and affordable housing and mixed-use commercial development of 5,800m^2 (62,431ft^2). Acquired by the Council in 2016, it is currently unused and vacant land with areas of hardstanding. It has been used as a clay pit, brick works and a concrete batching plant. Ecological work has commenced with completion planned for 2025. An application for grant funding has been made to help bring forward housing schemes on brownfield sites. It supports the costs of ecological and environmental works required prior to development. After remediation, construction of the housing will commence in earnest.

Coast Drive, New Romney

This scheme is set to transform the 250 space Coast Drive car park into a beachside visitor destination, with 108 new beach chalets, a water-sports/environmental education centre, catering kiosk, boardwalks and toilets with fully accessible facilities. This will echo the already successful beach chalet project at Folkestone Coastal Park.

The adjacent beach and Littlestone Greens, which offers open space, a play park and existing beach huts, are Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and the nearby Varne Boat Club/RNLI lifeboat station have launching facilities. New boardwalks will improve beach access while protecting the SSSI. Parking facilities will be upgraded, with a 75-space car park and 100 further spaces including disabled and EV charging. Subject to consents and funding, the project will open in 2022.

Highview, Folkestone

The Highview School site is to be transformed into a mixed residential scheme, made up of one-bed flats and two to four-bed houses. Designed to tie into the surrounding residential area with appropriate green space and parking scheme it is due to be complete by autumn 2023.

East Cliff – destination play area and visitor centre

Currently a tennis and bowls area, by 2022/3 this open space will have a new destination play area and visitor centre with parking and upgraded toilet facilities. The scheme is being progressed by the Council as landowner, working with a community group setup to provide and access funding.

Princes Parade

Work is progressing at this 150-home scheme on Hythe seafront, which will also include a hotel, shops and green spaces. The project will return the area, a former municipal tip, to public use and with a new swimming pool and leisure centre. Plans are being led by the Council and include the creation of a vehicle-free seafront promenade to open up the area for the enjoyment of visitors and residents.

Cheriton Parc

Motis Business Centre, within Cherion Parc, provides 27 managed office suites starting from 15m^2 (160ft^2) which benefit from shared facilities and a gated car park with 200 spaces. Planning has been submitted to progress the site in 2022, extending the existing Centre to offer further Class E offices of 557m^2 (6,000ft^2), children's nursery, café and gym. The plans include six commercial Class E and Class B8 units, the provision of a 115 space truck stop, a transhipment

CREDIT: FOLKESTONE AND HYTHE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Proposal for Otterpool Park, near Hythe.

building plus ancillary welfare facilities and a transport logistics office building.

Saga building

Middleburg House previously occupied by Saga Plc, at the time of this report has received a conditional offer. Interested parties are currently looking at options for the site including a mixed-use commercial and residential scheme.

Otterpool Park

Otterpool Park LLP has been progressing plans for this major new Garden Town, set within a countryside setting near Hythe. An application is due to be resubmitted for the first 8,500 homes, up to eight schools, community facilities, employment space and associated infrastructure. To be delivered over 30 years, subject to approvals, the project team is working to a start date of 2022.

At the Local Plan Examination in Public the Planning Inspectors concluded that the submitted Core Strategy Review can be made sound by main modifications, providing confidence that Otterpool Park will secure its allocation in the Local Plan. Detailed plans for Phase 1 were revealed in March. This key area of the Garden Town has 1,900 homes, the town centre and commercial area, Westenhanger station and a new Castle Park. This area will also contain two primary schools, community facilities, a leisure centre, shops and places to eat, drink and socialise.

For further information:
www.otterpoolpark.org

Thanet

The local economy has continued to grow seeing further inward investment, increased visitor numbers (given uncertainty with overseas travel) and people relocating to the area or working at home. House prices have risen, driven by purchasers who are exiting the London market. Improved connectivity is driving entrepreneurs to set up businesses for the local, national and international markets. It is recognised that the effect of the pandemic will be long lasting, on individuals, businesses and the local economy, potentially reshaping the local community. Outdoor attractions and local accommodation providers have benefitted from the 2021 staycation market.

CREDIT: KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

Proposal for the new Thanet Parkway Station.

Thanet District Council Local Plan was formally adopted in July and sets out the framework for future growth and development in the district to 2031. It identifies land for 18,000 new homes. Despite the pandemic work has continued on the key new build sites and a range of smaller sites adding to the variety of housing on offer. Last year saw an increase of 45% in completions over the previous year. Work is now well underway to build the new Thanet Parkway station west of Cliffsend, on the Ramsgate to Ashford International line. This will increase rail connectivity to London, Kent and access High Speed One. Once completed in 2023, journey times to London will be around one hour with parking for 300 cars as well as secure parking for bicycles and motorcycles. In turn this gives employment options for local residents and improves investment opportunities in Thanet's business parks.

Manston

Owners of the land at Manston Airport submitted an application for a development consent order. It proposes to re-open and develop Manston Airport into an air freight facility to handle at least 10,000 air cargo movements per year whilst offering passenger, executive travel and aircraft engineering services. Following the examination process, the Secretary of State for Transport has sought views on the proposals, commissioned an independent aviation assessor to consider the need for the proposals, with a report in due course.

Manston Business Park, owned by East Kent Opportunities, a partnership between Kent County Council and Thanet District Council has seen significant business investment with the completion of light industrial units for sale or rent, creating jobs in the area. Manston is well connected by dual carriageway to the motorway network.

Significant public sector investment is raising Thanet's profile among private investors and developers, with many opportunities to play a part in the exciting and diverse regeneration and reimagining of the area. A major road improvement (the Inner Circuit) is proposed to ease pressure on roads in Thanet. Part of this route, the A28 Birchington, Acol and Westgate-on-Sea Relief Road, is in the 'top ten' list of high-priority schemes for the South East. It will help to link existing and planned housing to key employment and leisure at Westwood Cross, Quex Park and the seafronts. It is part of a £3.5bn, five-year investment programme to cut congestion, speed up journeys and support growth across the South East. It was submitted to government by Transport for the South East, a new regional body of local authorities, business groups and the transport industry. It is being considered by the Department for Transport.

Infrastructure and Regeneration
Continued

Margate, Ramsgate and Broadstairs

The Council's use of its property portfolio also contributes to local economic growth. The industrial estate at Blenheim Close, Broadstairs has new/renewed leases to a firm of tool hire machinery for construction and gardening and an automotive upholstery business. Tivoli Road employment site in Margate is available and is being reviewed for commercial development of 20 light industrial units.

The Council has developed a vision for its main high streets and has received funding from the Future High Streets Fund (Ramsgate) and the Town Deal Programme (Margate). A £19.8m bid for Ramsgate was made to the government's Levelling Up Fund in June to cover investment in creating a Green Port, developments to the Royal Harbour and new community spaces in Newington and central Ramsgate for training and career development. This aims to create long term pathways for skills training and jobs in central Ramsgate. Alongside this, the 'Future Ramsgate Investment Plan' aims to make the most of assets and deliver a shared vision across Ramsgate to transform and regenerate the town.

In Margate, up to £22.2m of funding has been secured for a Town Deal with government for a number of projects across Margate. Some will encourage further public/private investment to bring forward key developments to create new jobs and address some of the impacts of the pandemic. Business cases are being developed to allow Margate to 'level up' and take advantage of the opportunities in the economy nationally. Tourism and creative industries are important sectors and will form part of the solution for regenerating town centres.

Despite the national retail picture, Thanet's high streets were beginning to buck the trend with growth in the independent retail and food/beverage sectors. Short term support, in the form of grants for small businesses helped to maintain this. In total, £28m has been provided to local business owners as well as work to support the safe reopening of high streets following the pandemic such as temporary adaptations to high streets and seafronts, with support from the Reopening High Streets Safely Fund and Welcome Back Fund.

Thanet's coastal resorts are being rediscovered, moving beyond the traditional seaside holiday. Their pull is now broader, attracting businesses and individuals looking to achieve the all important, work-life balance, whilst remaining a place to holiday. Relocate to Thanet to realise a coastal location, within easy reach of London, supported by the excellent High Speed One service.

Margate and Ramsgate have a huge variety of businesses, freelancers and creative practitioners to help drive a reputation as a location for film, TV and photoshoots. Visual appeal, proximity, affordability and creative flair make it an excellent choice for creative agencies and principal broadcasters when contracting for shoots and programme making. There is an opportunity to attract a cluster of such creative production companies to Thanet. In the last year, leading publications, household names and high-end brands have used Thanet's beaches, bays and towns as a backdrop for their photoshoots and productions, including Killing Eve, The Larkins, Whitsable Pearl, The Great, Vogue Portugal, John Lewis, River Island and Net a Porter. In 2020-2021, filming generated approximately £770,000 for the Thanet economy.

Trips to the popular and award-winning resorts of Margate, Broadstairs and Ramsgate rose by 9.9% in 2019 (from 2017). With investment in a number of large hotels planned, this trend is set to continue. There is a growing demand for out of season, short break, coastal tourism and smaller, alternative business events with an experiential element. The Local Plan makes provision for small-scale accommodation such as a seaside glamping or camping site to cater for these markets. Thanet's 19 miles of coastline and its cultural offer attracted 4.6m trips in 2019 which resulted in a 9.9% increase in value of the sector to the district (2017-2019). The sector accounts for 20% of total employment but there is now a dedicated focus on developing a year-round economy, driven by a focus on experiential tourism and commitment to the Anglo-French Interreg Experience Project.

CREDIT: HOLLAWAY

Proposal for Nayland Rock Hotel & Spa, Margate.

Margate's cultural resurgence has helped regenerate the Old Town with independent shops, galleries and eateries as well as the renowned Turner Contemporary. Dreamland, the historic amusement park, is also a music venue and events space. Planning permission has been granted for a 124-bed hotel adjacent to the site, to extend its out of season offer to encompass business, meetings, incentive, conference and events travel. The new Crab Museum, due to open later this year, and the steady increase in independent shops in Cliftonville add to the town's year-round offering for locals and visitors.

Broadstairs is looking firmly to the future however, with a number of independent shops, bars and restaurants launching throughout the town over the last year, including in a number of key sites on the seafront and harbour arm.

Ramsgate, the only Royal Harbour in Britain, and celebrating its 200 year Royal Charter this year, is a busy destination containing 650 leisure berths. Ramsgate is also recognised as one of the original ten founding national Heritage Action Zones by Historic England, one of only two in the South East.

For further information:
www.thanet.gov.uk

Kent County Council Property

Basic Need Programme for Schools

Kent County Council produces a Commissioning Plan for Education Provision in Kent (KCP) annually. The KCP sets out the principles to determine proposals and forecasts the need for future provision across Kent schools. It illustrates how the Council discharges its statutory responsibility to secure places for early years, Special Educational Need & Disabilities, primary and secondary children.

KCC have delivered expansions to 26 schools for over 4,355 pupils. For 2022, we are on course to deliver at least another 19 expansions and new schools resulting in an additional 3,937 places. Three new primary schools have opened during this period:

- Chilmington Green Primary, a 2FE with a 26-place nursery and a Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) Unit for Stour Academy Trust
- Ebbsfleet Primary School 1FE with 2FE infrastructure, 26-place nursery and SRP Unit for Maritime Academy Trust
- Platt Primary School: Increased pupil admissions to 1FE and worked with the DFE under Priority Schools Building programme to relocate and build a new 1FE Primary School.

Three Special Educational Need expansions:

- Beacon Satellite (Phase 1) part refurbishment of an old secondary school in Walmer. Phases 2 and 3 will follow once funding agreed
- Broomhill (North and West) 108 additional places achieved by installing mobiles and refurbishment works
- Meadowfield Special School: 100 additional places achieved by design and build extension to the existing school.

The Basic Need Programme developed opportunities through our Framework contractors/sub-contractors to offer construction apprenticeships:

- temporary Services
- scaffolding
- modern methods of construction (Streif)
- painting and decorating
- mechanical
- electrical
- carpentry and joinery
- flooring
- apprentice construction manager.

Kent Estates Partnership

The Kent Estates Partnership (KEP) brings together Kent local authorities, NHS, Higher Education/Further Education, blue light services and central government to identify and promote collaborative projects and opportunities. KEP enables engagement with the national One Public Estate programme (OPE), providing the potential for bids for OPE, MHCLG and other funding opportunities.

OPE provides support and funding to deliver ambitious property-focused programmes in collaboration and taking a strategic approach to asset management.

OPE funding is designed to help project initiation/ development work for projects with a higher risk profile. The expansion of the programme to include MHCLG Land Release Fund (LRF) has enabled partners to bid for funding towards projects further on in the process and considered 'shovel ready'. It is aimed at small-scale land remediation and infrastructure works on land unusable for development. KEP has entered bids in four funding rounds and has been allocated £1.2m in OPE funding and £0.87m from two rounds of MHCLG's LRF.

All the projects are targeted to ensure the efficient use of the public sector estate and support the release of surplus land for housing. The successful projects are:

OPE

- Dartford Town Centre including Integrated Health & Social Care Campus
- Dover Discovery Centre
- Ebbsfleet Grove Road
- Ebbsfleet Integration of Healthy Living & Preventative Care Services
- KEP Shared Spaces Working Group
- Maidstone East Civic Quarter
- Paddock Wood Community Centre
- Repton Housing & Health Hub
- Sittingbourne Civic Quarter
- West Kent Blue Light Hub
- West Kent Partnership
- Whitfield Public Sector Office Hub.

LRF

- Brunswick Street and Union Street, Maidstone
- Kings Street Car Park, Maidstone
- Heather House and Pavilion, Maidstone.

Expected outcomes across the partnerships for the successful bids are £23m in capital receipts, with £1.9m in revenue savings, an estimated 3000 jobs created and over 1000 homes built as a result of these projects. For example, the Brunswick and Union Street schemes secured £658,000 to help prepare and decontaminate the land. This project is nearing completion and will deliver 94 new homes.

For further information:
www.KentEstatesPartnership@kent.gov.uk

Other projects

Southborough Community Hub

A new mixed-use development in the heart of Southborough, delivered by KCC, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Southborough Town Council with funding from land sales, NHS and Football Foundation:

CREDIT: GORDON YOUNG, HMY ARCHITETCS

Southborough Hub.

Infrastructure and Regeneration
Continued

- library
- community hall
- Southborough Town Council offices
- retail unit
- medical centre
- sports pavilion
- Southborough Town Council depot

It commenced in November 2019 and then continued with new pandemic working restrictions and guidelines, completing in March this year.

Creative Enterprise Quarter, Ashford
One of Kent's largest cultural infrastructure projects is under construction with anticipated completion in spring 2022 forming the "Creative Enterprise Quarter" in Ashford.

The new Jasmin Vardimon facility is being built piloting an innovative and unique approach by using the value of the industrial units as an enabling development to provide investment for new building. Further capital investment has been secured from Arts Council England, the Cultural Recovery Fund's Capital Kickstart Fund, Ashford Borough Council (ABC) from the Business Rates Retention Pilot (a fund which aims to support housing and commercial growth in the borough) and the South East Local Enterprise Partnership's Getting Building Fund.

Jasmin Vardimon, will be a new creative hub with state-of-the-art facilities for the internationally renowned dance company to expand and create the company's touring productions and rehearsals. Dedicated studios will grow the company's acclaimed educational programmes and community classes and provide additional incubator space for small creative businesses. The primary creation space with a large studio, fully sprung dance floor, full lighting, sound and audio visual will be available to hire by external creative companies. A new café and meeting rooms will provide flexible community spaces.

The building will form the centre of a major new arts hub in Ashford known as the Creative Enterprise Quarter with the 26 light industrial units ranging from 314m^2 (3,380ft^2) to 339m^2 (3,649ft^2) GIA with mezzanine options available on all units. This provides 3,453m^2 (37,168ft^2 of commercial units for sale/lease to attract creative businesses and the commercial market.

For further information:
info@jasminvardimon.com
phil.hubbard@sibleypares.co.uk

Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund Success
Kent County Council has received government funding of £20.6m for energy projects within the Council's estate. In addition, a further £1.2m for school site energy projects from the governments Department for Business Energy & Industrial Strategy's Public Decarbonisation Scheme has been provided. Cumulatively, it is anticipated that the projects will reduce carbon emissions from the Council's estate by 40% (some 7,097 tonnes of CO^2 based on the latest energy usage of 17,660 tonnes to September 2020), and enable delivery towards its net-zero carbon emissions target.

Alongside delivery of the net-zero target, the proposed projects will reduce the Council's energy costs and provide an income from two solar parks. It aims to stimulate the low carbon economy in Kent, create jobs and set up key development infrastructure to meet future energy challenges such as security of supply.

CREDIT: KCC

Proposal for Jasmin Vardimon Dance Academy, Ashford.

Housing

Housing market

There were 19,570 property transactions in Kent (KCC area) during the calendar year 2020, and a further 3,036 in Medway Unitary area. These figures are lower than the previous year by -14.0% in Kent and -20.7% in Medway. This pattern follows a general trend for slower sales during 2020 and likely reflects the impact of the pandemic. Transactions in England & Wales were down by -20.1% compared with 2019 and in the South East transactions were down by -16.7%.

Within Kent, Maidstone and Sevenoaks saw the lowest reduction in property transactions since 2019 (-3.4% and -5.2% respectively) with both areas seeing 79 fewer transactions. Dartford saw the biggest reduction with 569 fewer transactions, a fall of 29.8% over the previous year.

Kent remains good value for house buyers. The overall average property price in Kent during 2020 was £365,689. This is 11.1% lower than the average property price in the South East (£411,466), but 12.9% higher than the average for England & Wales (£323,868). The average house price masks a significant range in prices across Kent, with an average of £561,020 in Sevenoaks to £283,694 in Thanet. The average price in the Medway Unitary area was £283,734.

Overall house prices in Kent increased by £23,619 since 2019, an increase of 6.9% (+4.4% in Medway). This is below the national (+7.9%) and regional (+7.3%) increase. All districts in the county saw an increase ranging between +£50,465 in Sevenoaks to +£4,483 in Dartford.

Based on the number of Energy Performance Certificates issued on new dwellings, during 2020 there were 6,773 new dwellings built across Kent. This a 3.0% decrease on the 2019 total of 6,984.

Sources: HM Land Registry Open Data Standard Reports Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG): Live table NB1.

Housing Delivery Test (HDT)

In February 2019, the first annual HDT results for councils were published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG).

CREDIT: TRENPORT

View from the Escarpment-Peters Village near Burham.

Housing Delivery Test (%)	Total net homes delivered over three year period / Total number of homes required over three year period

Housing Delivery Test: 2020 Measurement – Percentages Indicate total number of homes delivered against homes required (2017 – 2020).

Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) are required to take specific action depending upon their HDT result, these actions persist until subsequent HDT results are published or new housing requirements are adopted. The transitional arrangements in place when the HDT was first introduced, are no longer applicable and the current thresholds are:

- pass (>95%): No action required
- action plan (<95%): LPAs are required to prepare an action plan setting out the causes of under delivery and the intended actions to increase this
- 20% land buffer (<85%): LPAs are required for an additional 20% to be applied to the supply of deliverable sites.
- presumption in favour of sustainable development (<75%): proposed developments should be granted planning permission unless the adverse impacts outweigh the benefits.

HDT results, published in January 2021, demonstrated a varied performance over the three-year results:

- Maidstone at 146% and Dartford at 121% have passed the test and have no action required
- housing delivery in Tonbridge and Malling 91%, Folkestone and Hythe 91%, Tunbridge Wells 85%, Ashford 90%, Canterbury 87% and Swale 89% delivery was below government expectations at less than 95% of the allocated target and are required to have an action plan.
- Dover at 80% is required to implement a 20% buffer under the NPPF
- Sevenoaks 70%, Gravesham 70%, Medway 55% and Thanet 54% performance means a presumption in favour of sustainable development now applies to housing proposals in these authorities.

Infrastructure and Regeneration
Continued

The government has announced that it will substantially ease the next set of housing delivery test results by subtracting four months from councils' housing requirement figures for 2020/21 – a third of the entire year – due to the disruption caused to homebuilding by the pandemic.

Kent and Medway Housing Strategy 2020-2025 'A Place People Want to Call Home'
Housing delivery remains high priority for government, with continued commitment to accelerate housing and the target of 300,000 news homes each year by the end of the parliament. To support this ambitious national target, government has made £4m available through the Community Housing Fund Revenue Programme 2021/22 to award grants to eligible community organisations in England. The programme will help cover revenue costs of project-specific activities that support the development of community led housing proposals. The Affordable Homes Programme provides grant funding to support the capital costs of affordable housing for rent or sale. Homes England will be making available £7.39bn from April 2021 to deliver up to 130,000 affordable homes by March 2026 – outside London. New Strategic Partners were announced in September 2021, delivering nearly 90,000 grant funded affordable homes between 2021 and 2026.

The Kent and Medway Housing Strategy 2020-25 'A Place People Want To Call Home' has been aligned to current challenges and opportunities at a strategic level, both nationally and locally. It links to, and references, the Homes England five year Strategic Vision (2018 to 2023), the South East LEP Economic Strategy Statement and the Kent and Medway Growth and Infrastructure Framework.

The Kent & Medway Housing Strategy 2020-2025 provides a platform for a shared approach to meet the county's housing challenge (including tenure, affordability and supported housing) within Kent and Medway. The document can be used by partners to lobby at local and national levels and ensure that Kent and Medway can meet growth ambitions of their communities. The strategy is all-encompassing and is relevant to all providers of homes in Kent and Medway and provides clarity on the major strategic housing challenges.

Housing White Paper
The Government's social housing white paper, 'The Charter for Social Housing Residents', was published on 17 November 2020. It promises widespread reform to social housing regulation, the quality standards applicable to social homes and the relationships between social housing residents and their landlords.

Planning White Paper
In August 2020 the government published proposals to overhaul the planning system, the Planning for the Future White Paper. The government has consulted on reforms including a nationally set formula to achieve housing and announced a Planning Bill during the Queens Speech. Other proposals as part of the wider reforms:

- extending Permitted Development Rights (PDR)
- changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- a new draft National Model Design Code (NMDC).

Concerns were raised by local authorities and MP's on the proposed formula for calculation of housing numbers. Under Michel Gove, the new Secretary of State for the renamed Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), progress with reforms could be paused and reviewed.

Homes England
The Homes England Affordable Housing Programme for Kent and Medway delivered 4,818 Affordable Homes in the period to February 2021. That is 2,939 Affordable Home Ownership, 1,817 Affordable Rent and 62 Social Rent Homes.

Homes England has been actively intervening in the Kent and Medway housing market as the governments appointed housing market disruptor. The government has invested in Homes England to provide resources and skills to deliver strategic advice, brokering and enabling to support delivery.

Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF)
Kent and Medway have secured allocations for the delivery of infrastructure and affordable housing designed to:

- deliver physical infrastructure to support new and existing communities
- make more land available for housing in high demand areas, resulting in new additional homes, that otherwise would not have been built
- support ambitious local authorities with plans for growth and make a meaningful difference to overall housing supply
- enable local authorities to recycle the funding for other infrastructure schemes and deliver more new homes in the future.

Homes England can provide lending/development finance, structured real estate investment and infrastructure finance, with Gravesend Canal Basin in Gravesham being an example.

The brokering role includes working with equity and partnership guarantees, joint venture partnership, attracting institutional investments and guarantees. An example of this is Chatham Maritime in Medway.

Interventions include land acquisition and assembly to enable and de-risk schemes that the market is not ready to activate. An example of this is Homes England land acquisition at Otterpool Park to support the district councils Garden Town.

First Homes scheme
Launched on 4 June 2021 it is designed to help local first-time buyers by offering homes at a discount of at least 30% compared to market price. That same percentage will then be passed on with the sale of the property to future first-time buyers, meaning homes will always be sold below market value – benefitting local communities, key workers, and families into the future. In August house builders across England were invited to bid for a share of a £150m package by offering plots for sale as First Homes. They were invited to work with the government to deliver First Homes across the country, delivering 1,500 homes by March 2023.

No Use Empty (NUE)

Now in its 16th year NUE has secured £4m further investment from KCC to provide larger secured interest-bearing loans to developers who bring derelict land or sites back to life by providing new build homes, and £2m from the Growing Places Fund to support the NUE Commercial project.

With the construction industry experiencing challenging times, initiatives such as No Use Empty (NUE) are increasingly important in supporting the recovery of the Kent economy. NUE had an unprecedented increase in loan applications across in the last financial year. A total of 60 individual loans, including 18 from our new build fund, were approved compared to 33 individual loans in 2019/20.

Delivered by Kent County Council (KCC) in partnership with all 12 district councils NUE is the longest running empty property initiative in the country. NUE remains committed to reducing the numbers of long-term empty properties, returning more than 6,924 back into use since 2005 through a range of interventions:

- adjusting delivery models to reflect current market conditions
- providing financial assistance to owners by offering short term secured loans with repayments recycled for new loans
- continuity over a sustained period.

No Use Empty – Residential

Data provided by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) shows that there are 237,594 long term empty dwellings in England, an increase on last year of 11,809. Long-term means those dwellings that have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for over six months.

Latest Council Tax records show that there are 7,476 long term empty dwellings in Kent (6,032 are in the Kent area and 1,444 in the Medway Council area) which represents 3.1% of the national total. Figures include all tenures (Local Authority, Housing Association and Private sector); although many empty properties are privately owned. In the financial year 20/21 NUE recorded 462 long term empty properties being brought back into use.

NUE provides short term secured loans awarding £42m to date and levering in £35.9m from the public/private sectors, which have supported 1,209 units across Kent since its launch. Over £25.5m (60%) of funding advanced has already been repaid/recycled.

The combination of NUE loans and top-up loans are designed to help developers bridge the gap between pre/post refurbishment values by providing a loan which takes account of cost of works, which other lenders will not do. Without this approach these properties would have remained empty. In addition, £2.9m was allocated with a focus on Margate to meet the increased demand to tackle larger buildings to be converted to much needed family homes.

Nelson House, Ramsgate

NUE provided an interest free loan to help Raycasa Investments Ltd return this Grade II property back into use and providing 511m^2 (5,500ft^2) of accommodation. On a prominent Georgian crescent in Ramsgate, overlooking the marina and Royal Harbour, the property enjoys an enviable position. It had been empty and dilapidated for eight years and has been comprehensively and sensitively restored. Works have been executed with careful consideration of how a Georgian town house is best arranged to embrace modern living. The period features have been retained or reinstated, embracing the quality of the building.

CREDIT: NUE-RAYCASA INVESTMENTS LTD

No Use Empty restoration of Nelson House, Ramsgate.

No Use Empty – Commercial (Phase II)

NUE's focus has been on residential properties. However, in 2018 KCC secured an extra £1m from The Growing Places Fund (GPF) established by MHCLG and administered through the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP). The aim is to unlock economic growth, create jobs and 'kick-start' house building at stalled sites. Operating as a recyclable loan scheme it complements NUE.

NUE provided short term secured loans to return empty commercial properties (shops/redundant workspaces) to use for commercial or mixed-uses. Individual projects in Dover, Folkestone and Hythe and Thanet were supported which returned 15 commercial units back into use (target was 8) and created 28 residential units. Following this success, KCC secured a further £2m GPF support in 2021 for a second phase to return 16 commercial units and provide 36 residential units by March 2024.

Sandgate Road, Folkestone

In a prominent position in Folkestone it has been vacant for two years. A local developer has planning permission financial support from NUE. Browns Construction will deliver 8 new residential units and return the ground floor and basement for commercial use.

No Use Empty breaking new ground

In 2020 KCC made available £12m to be operated on a recyclable basis for NUE to provide funding for new builds on derelict or vacant land with the required permissions in place. Loans are secured as a first charge and interest is collected quarterly with the capital loan being repaid on an agreed future date or a sale. Demand was such that by March 2021 all funds had been exhausted with approved loans for 96 new homes in Kent of which 17 have been completed (Broadstairs, Dover and Ramsgate). KCC have made available a further £4m, coupled with existing and future loan repayments NUE will have £6-8m available per year to for new projects.

Infrastructure and Regeneration
Continued

St Mildred's Avenue, Ramsgate
NUE supported a development of 7 luxury one, two and 3-bed apartments, fronting Ramsgate's Royal Esplanade with south facing panoramic sea views. Local developers Pemberton Estates delivered the project at a total cost of £1.4m with an interest-bearing loan from KCC. All apartments are sold and the loan repaid and now recycled to the next project on the waiting list.

No Use Empty going fNo Use Empty going forward
By returning domestic and commercial properties to use NUE continues to increase Council Tax receipts for local authorities, has attracted New Homes Bonus (NHB) and helped to generate new Business Rates. The initiative created or safeguarded over 1,400 jobs and provided homes to more than 2,600 local people. Kent's approach to tackling empty properties has been widely praised:

- winning three national awards for Regeneration and Partnership Working
- the County Council were the only non-housing authority finalist in 'Council of the Year' at the UK Housing Awards 2020
- featured in 'Dealing with Empty Shops' by the Local Government Association (LGA).

Further bids have been submitted for £2.5m to the Growing Places Fund to support NUE residential schemes. NUE extended to Medway Council with an initial pilot project in the second quarter of 2021.

For further information:
www.nue.org.uk
www.local.gov.uk/dealing-empty-shops-guide

CREDIT: PEMBERTON ESTATES

33 St Mildred's Avenue, Ramsgate (before).

CREDIT: PEMBERTON ESTATES

Proposal for seven apartments now built at St Mildred's Avenue, Ramsgate.

The Kent & Medway Infrastructure Proposition
Building on the Kent & Medway Growth & Infrastructure Framework and individual council plans, "Infrastructure First" is a proposal to government to:

- secure new funding for critical infrastructure across the county to release planned growth
- explore options and opportunities to grant Kent & Medway new planning flexibilities and freedoms
- establish a new way of working with Kent & Medway across government to support local growth ambitions and public service infrastructure including where growth has already been delivered and public services are under strain.

Recognising that many areas have delivered high rates of housing growth while others have struggled, it aims to level-up delivery and opportunity across the county. This "Infrastructure First" approach builds on a successful track record, with housing delivery amongst the highest of all areas of similar size and with established and proven joint working between councils. It will:

- deliver high-quality growth where it is wanted and planned
- provide jobs and homes for local people
- support a growing older population to live independently for longer
- bring empty homes and brownfield land back into use and protect our countryside.

Kent & Medway Renewal and Resilience Plan
During the pandemic, this provided a framework for recovery and growth, helping to keep Kent and Medway open for business and support local firms, inward investment and employment. Key actions included:

- the extension of the Growth Hub Business Support Helpline
- additional loan support through the Kent and Medway Business Fund
- over £30m investment in immediate economic infrastructure projects.

As the economy returns to growth, work is now starting on a longer-term Economic Strategy for Kent, ensuring that jobs and businesses are resilient and adaptable to a 'net zero' economy and that the conditions are in place to

support sustained productivity growth. Protecting jobs was a top priority during the pandemic. The Kent and Medway Employment Task Force brought together local authorities, MPs, education providers, business and the Department of Work and Pensions to support access to skills provision and ensure the county benefited fully from central government initiatives, such as the Kickstart scheme for younger workers. As the economy adjusts to increased demand, skills shortfalls and labour supply bottlenecks are challenging, and the Task Force continues to identify solutions and support long-term changes in skills provision to meet employer need. This includes a Local Skills Improvement Plan – one of six 'trailblazer schemes' backed by government across England.

Future High Streets Fund

The government launched Our Plan for the High Street at Budget 2018. This included £675m for a Future High Streets Fund. The aim of the fund is to reshape town centres and high streets in a way that drives growth, improves experience and ensures future sustainability. It will do this by providing co-funding to successful applicants to support transformative and structural changes to overcome challenges in their area. In 2019 £325m was added, taking the overall Future High Streets Fund to £1bn.

In December 2020 up to £830m had been allocated from the Future High Streets Fund. Fifteen areas were awarded £255m, with a further 57 areas in receipt of provisional funding of £576m.

The Communities Secretary announced in May 2021 confirmation of funding for all 57 places that previously received provisional offers. In total, 72 places nationally will share over £830m from the Future High Streets Fund to deliver projects, which will support their towns and high streets to reopen and recover from the effects of the pandemic. In Kent these are:

Dover town centre and waterfront	£3,196,497
Chatham town centre, Medway	£9,497,720
Ramsgate, Thanet	£2,704,213

Remaining funding has been used to support local capacity, the High Streets Task Force and other related priorities including the development of a new parking code, and support for Business Improvement Districts.

Greater North Kent (GNK)

This body exists to promote economic prosperity, social wellbeing and sustainable place-making in North Kent: Dartford, Gravesham, Maidstone, Medway and Swale. The shared goal is to harness collective strengths and influence through cross-boundary collaboration and evidence-based engagement with stakeholders to bring positive change across the whole of North Kent and enable GNK partners to better deliver their own strategic visions.

Thames Estuary Growth Board

The Thames Estuary Growth Board, chaired by Kate Willard OBE, was established by Government to enable growth in the Thames Estuary from the capital to the coast. It was formed in response to the Thames Estuary 2050 Growth Commission led by Sir John Armitt which identified the potential to create 1.3m new jobs and generate £190bn additional GVA in the Estuary, with at least one million new homes to support this growth.

At full strength for just over a year now, the strong private sector-led Board published The Green Blue, its ambitious vision for transforming the region of North Kent, South Essex and East London. The Board engages in projects where private sector investment will accelerate growth and have regional impact by:

- acting as champion for investment projects
- convening local agencies and partners
- removing obstacles to make things happen.

It aims to partner with investors and co-invest in early-stage projects as catalysts. Major projects underway include:

- developing the Estuary's hydrogen infrastructure
- increasing the use of the river for light freight
- supporting digital connectivity
- promoting critical infrastructure.

The Leaders of Kent County Council, Medway Council and Dartford Borough Council are all Thames Estuary Growth Board members.

Thames Estuary Production Corridor: A Good Place for Making

Pre-pandemic the creative industries were worth over £110bn to the UK economy and were growing five times faster than the economy as a whole. Such industries have proved to be resilient to automation and can offer worthwhile, productive employment for our communities in the future. The estimated supply chain spend per annum by the creative industries across the UK is £127bn.

The Thames Estuary Production Corridor (TEPC) is a significant programme across East London, North Kent and South Essex to create a world-class centre for creative and cultural production. TEPC will now play a crucial role in London and the South East's social and economic recovery after the pandemic. It will contribute to longer-term growth through forward-thinking investment in culture and the creative industries. It aims to create thousands of jobs in a time of need, build world-class cultural infrastructure and develop local skills crucial to delivering sustainable and equitable growth.

Update on projects

One way TEPC is delivering is via the Creative Estuary project. The ambition is simple: to transform 60 miles of the Thames Estuary, across Kent and Essex into one of the world's most exciting cultural hubs. It will transform the visibility, identity and future of the area's creative production infrastructure, support over 400 new jobs, and deliver new skills, qualifications and apprenticeships in an area of 1.5m people. Creative Estuary is supported by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport's Cultural Development Fund administered by Arts Council England.

In September 2021 Creative Estuary published research that found a positive association between the presence of creative workspace and residential property values. The evidence suggests there is a financial value to the benefits that creative industries bring to residential areas. The research report can be found on the website.

Also recently launched is the new Creative Estuary property portal, a commercial property search tool designed specifically for the creative industry. The needs of creative industries are broad – from warehouses and production facilities, to studios, co-working spaces and retail outlets. The property portal can be found on the wesbite.

Infrastructure and Regeneration
Continued

Consultants, We Made That, are delivering a project with partners to identify new development sites for creative and cultural production, formulate action plans for the region's high growth fashion and screen-based industries and develop feasibility studies for new flagship cultural infrastructure across the region.

Dating back to the 1860s, the Police Section House, Chatham was once the home of the Dockyard Police Force. A Grade II listed building, it has stood empty for many years but ambitious plans for the Docking Station project are now in place to open the building as a multi-use cultural and creative space. Creative Estuary, working with the University of Kent and Medway Council, is developing a model to transform the building, considered to be one of Historic Dockyard Chatham's most prominent yet unused listed buildings, into an innovative creative digital hub.

For further information on developing and/or investing in TEPC and Creative Estuary:
www.info@creativeestuary.com

Transportation

Local Growth Fund
In 2014, government announced planned investment of at least £12bn nationally to promote growth in local economies through a series of 'Growth Deals' to operate over six years from 2015/16. Known as Local Growth Funding (LGF) it would finance infrastructure and skills schemes that, in turn, would unlock housing growth and encourage job creation.

In March 2016, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government announced the release of Round Three of Local Growth Funding (LGF3), worth £1.8bn across England. The Government stipulated that the LGF3 funding would be allocated to Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) through a competitive bidding process. Of this, the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) received £102m of government funding to help create jobs, support businesses and create new growth opportunities.

Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) has called for all LEPs to ensure that any LGF underspends are invested in the most effective way. In response, SELEP devised the LGF3b process, whereby a pipeline of schemes was agreed to be funded as and when LGF underspend becomes available. For Kent, this has meant the following schemes will now be delivered:

- Thanet Parkway Railway Station
- M2 Junction 5, Stockbury
- Kent and Medway Medical School, Canterbury
- Advanced Technology Horticultural Zone, East Malling.

Kent County Council is responsible for the programme management of all 36 Local Growth Fund projects in Kent with specific projects where third-party organisations are responsible for delivery.

CREDIT: FEILDEN CLEGG BRADLEY STUDIOS

Proposal for Creative Estuary, University of Kent & Medway Council Docking Station project, Chatham.

Lower Thames Crossing

In April 2017 the Secretary of State for Transport announced the preferred route for the new Lower Thames Crossing, which it is hoped will form the first part of a new strategic route from the Channel ports to the Midlands and North. It will be a bored tunnel under the River Thames east of Tilbury and Gravesend and will to connect to the A2. This new crossing will add more than 70% to road capacity between Essex/ Kent, unlock investment and create thousands of new jobs.

The preferred route was carefully selected to minimise community and environmental impacts as far as possible, whilst providing the transport and economic benefits of a modern, alternative crossing. It will help address existing congestion, deliver significant economic growth and provide resilience on the strategic road network. The 70mph, 13-mile route and crossing will be built to the highest safety standards incorporating the most up-to-date engineering and information technology.

Consultations have been undertaken since the preferred announcement including a statutory consultation in 2018, a supplementary consultation in early 2020, a further design refinement consultation in summer 2020 and a community impacts consultation in summer 2021.

The scheme is being taken through the Development Consent Order (DCO) planning process for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs). Highways England expect to submit the DCO to the Planning Inspectorate by the end of 2021. Construction is due to start in 2024 and the new crossing is expected to open by 2029/30. A commitment to take the scheme through development and into delivery was announced with the second Road Investment Strategy (RIS2) by the Department for Transport in March 2020.

Operation Brock/Stack

Operation Brock was introduced as a measure to queue cross-channel freight vehicles on the approach to the Port of Dover and Channel Tunnel if there was disruption as a result of the end of the UK's transition out of the EU. It consists of a contraflow on the M20 between junctions 8-9 on the London-bound carriageway enabling 2-way flows, while the coastbound carriageway is used to queue cross-channel freight vehicles. The barrier to enable this contraflow is stored on the hard shoulder when not in use (allowing both carriageways of the motorway to operate as normal) and can be moved into position if needed. Brock is part of a multi-agency plan that includes the Dover Traffic Access Protocol (TAP) on the A20 and the Inland Border Facility (IBF) Sevington.

Overnight lorry parking

Kent County Council has been working with the private sector to promote the delivery of a network of overnight lorry parks across the county. Ashford International Truck Stop has recently expanded from 390 to 600 spaces and other sites are being considered by the private sector. Kent County Council is also working with the Department for Transport, District Councils and Kent Police on stronger enforcement action against illegal lorry parking to address the problems of inappropriate lorry parking across Kent.

Local Transport Plan

Local Transport Plan 4: Delivering Growth Without Gridlock 2016 – 2031 (LTP4) was adopted by Kent County Council in July 2017. This plan aims to deliver transport priorities for Kent which will contribute to a safe and efficient transport system. Since the adoption of LTP4, there have been rapid changes in both local and national government policy around the environment, significant changes to how we work and travel due to the pandemic, and advancement of technology for electric vehicles and personal mobility. To address these challenges, KCC is proposing to produce a new Local Transport Plan 5.

Transport for the South East (TfSE)

This body consists of Kent, Medway, East Sussex, West Sussex, Surrey, Hampshire, Brighton & Hove, Southampton, Portsmouth, Isle of Wight and the Berkshire local authorities, plus the five Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) within this area.

In 2020, TfSE submitted its proposal to government for statutory status. The Secretary of State declined this proposal and instead decided that TfSE should remain a voluntary partnership working together for the benefit of economic growth both within the region and nationally. However, the Department for Transport has been instructed to have regard to the Transport Strategy for the South East in developing government policy. This strategy was published in 2021 during the pandemic. The 30-year strategy aims to produce a better transport network across the region so that people are better connected with jobs, education, businesses, family and friends. The goals are for a more productive and sustainable South East, with net-zero carbon at the forefront.

TfSE is already making the case to government for investment in rail and the Strategic Road Network (SRN) and submitted its priorities for the next Road Investment Strategy (RIS) which informed the government's announcement on RIS in March 2020. In Kent, RIS priorities that received commitment from government include the new Lower Thames Crossing and the development of pipeline schemes for improvements to the M2/A2 corridor at M2 Junction 7 (Brenley Corner) and improved access to Dover via the A2.

Improvements to the connection between the M2 at Junction 3 with the M20 at Junction 6 via the A229 (Bluebell Hill) were not included in RIS but are being developed by Kent County Council for a bid through TfSE to the Department for Transport (DfT) for Large Local Major (LMM) scheme funding. This bid was part of the work that TfSE were asked to do by the DfT to prioritise schemes for the Major Road Network (MRN), a new category of road announced by government in December 2018 for the most important local authority A roads. In Kent, schemes that are being progressed for MRN funding include improvements to the A249 at M2 Junction 5 (Stockbury) to ensure that this Highways England RIS scheme is delivered (and was given planning approval by the Secretary of State in June 2021), which is essential to the Swale Local Plan; and a new relief road of the A28 around Birchington, Westgate and Acol which will enable growth in the Thanet Local Plan.

Rail network improvements in Kent

Projects in progress to support economic growth through improvements to the rail service in Kent are:

Journey Time Improvement (JTI) Scheme

Phase 1 of this scheme to improve the journey time between Ashford and Canterbury West is now almost completed. Following successful testing, the main journey time improvement from this phase has benefitted passengers since its inclusion in the December 2019 timetable.There is one further enhancement required to deliver the full 2 minutes' saving in both directions on this section, and this is programmed for completion by May 2023.

Infrastructure and Regeneration
Continued

Phase 2 of this scheme between Canterbury West and Ramsgate is focused on an intervention between Sturry and Minster, which is planned to deliver a further ½ minute saving in both directions. This work has now been approved with a successful application to Government for funding and is programmed for delivery by May 2023. The whole JTI scheme will support economic growth in Thanet and is essential to support the delivery of the planned Thanet Parkway station. The total journey time saving in both directions will be 2½ minutes, which will mitigate the time penalty of trains calling at the new Thanet Parkway station.

Thanet Parkway Station

There is good progress on Thanet Parkway, a new railway station near Cliffsend, for operation by May 2023. This new station will significantly improve rail access to and from London for local communities and developments at Discovery Park and Manston business parks and is expected to offer journey times to London of just over one hour from Thanet Parkway. Network Rail is delivering the new station through their contractor BAM Nuttall following completion of the new road junction by Eurovia working for KCC.

Ashford International: The Ashford Spurs Project

This project was successfully completed and commissioned in December 2019, with the resolution of the technical problems associated with the upgraded signalling and train protection system on the 'Spurs' which link Ashford International Station with High Speed One. The Local Growth Fund has been the primary source of funding through the South East LEP. Eurostar had planned to restore the full level of services to Paris and Brussels in May 2020, but the pandemic has delayed this following the announcement that Eurostar would have to suspend services at both Ebbsfleet and Ashford until 2022 at the earliest due to the 90% reduction in demand for its services.

Once normal service levels resume to and from continental destinations, the full timetabled service is expected to be restored at both Ashford and Ebbsfleet. Kent County Council and Ashford Borough Council will continue to work in close partnership with Eurostar and have re-submitted a business case for an enhancement to the level of the Ashford to Brussels service once commercial conditions permit.

Network Rail's Kent Area Route Study

Kent County Council responded to the consultation on the new Kent Area Route Study undertaken by Network Rail and published in May 2018. It sets out a range of options for funders for infrastructure enhancements required on Kent's rail network between 2019 and 2024, and also indicates the further growth in rail infrastructure required in Kent to 2044. This study also recognises the significant planned increase in demand at Ebbsfleet, given the development plans for housing growth in Ebbsfleet Garden City.

South Eastern Area: new concession

Since the last Kent Property Market Report, train services in Kent remain with Southeastern working directly for the DfT due to the continued collapse of rail demand following successive lockdowns. The Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail was published in May 2021 outlining the future for the industry. This includes a new body, Great British Railways, that will absorb Network Rail and some of the functions that currently sit with the DfT and franchisees. Franchising will be replaced by new Passenger Services Contracts. In this new era, Great British Railways will specify the timetables, branding, fares, and other service requirements and then agree a fee with a service operator via a commercial procurement.

KCC will comment on any consultations on future train services in the area in line with the Kent Rail Strategy which was adopted by KCC's Cabinet in March 2021. It is now understood that the Direct Award to Southeastern is being reviewed.

Kent Rail Strategy 2021

KCC has adopted the 'Kent Rail Strategy 2021'. The principal purpose of this new rail strategy is to influence the train service and rolling-stock fleet specifications which will

CREDIT: NETWORK RAIL

Works underway on the railway embankment for the new Thanet Parkway Station.

CREDIT: MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

The upgraded Maidstone East station.

inform the next South Eastern concession, for the operation of Kent's rail passenger network for at least the next decade.

The Kent Rail Strategy is aligned with national and local transport policies which recognise rail as a key element of the County Council's transport priorities for the next decade, as well as the need to deliver modal shift of passengers and freight from road to rail, supporting the climate change agenda by reducing carbon emissions and thus contributing to a healthier environment. The strategy includes a wide-ranging list of proposed service enhancements for the new concession's train service requirement.

Thameslink

Thameslink operates to Kent, serving Medway via Dartford. A second route has been planned via Maidstone East and was due to commence in December 2019, but this has now been further delayed and the date of its introduction is still to be confirmed by the DfT. If this service is introduced it would provide an additional route linking Maidstone East, West Malling (for Kings Hill), Borough Green & Wrotham, Otford and Swanley with London Blackfriars.

Ebbsfleet International: Ebbsfleet Garden City

The existing High Speed One service at Ebbsfleet Garden City had been forecast to be unable to meet the projected demand from the planned housing growth in the new Garden City, prior to the impacts on rail demand arising from the pandemic. All peak High Speed One services which served Ebbsfleet prior to the pandemic were already full to capacity, and it was often difficult to obtain a seat in the off-peak periods. This is a serious issue if demand returns to pre-pandemic levels and will need to be addressed by lengthening trains on the High Speed One network, running more services where possible, and supporting travel demand by improving the wider National Rail and local transport networks.

Abbey Wood to Ebbsfleet: future provision of public transport

With the planned opening of Crossrail 1 (Elizabeth Line) to Abbey Wood now postponed until at least 2022, KCC and other local authorities are jointly considering, with Transport for London, the Greater London Authority and other public authorities, the options for future provision of public transport between Abbey Wood and Ebbsfleet, one of which could be an extension of Crossrail to Ebbsfleet. Public consultation has taken place in 2021 on the range of public transport options to support growth in the north Kent corridor between Abbey Wood and Gravesend. The work has been funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, with oversight by the Department for Transport. In late 2021, a new Strategic Outline Business Case will be submitted to government to set out the case for funding development of preferred options.

More information on those consultations is available at

www.abbeywood2ebbsfleet.com

Sandwich Station

Kent County Council was the client local authority for the Sandwich Station capacity upgrade project, which has now been successfully delivered on time by Network Rail. The project, which consists of two platform extensions, a new footbridge, and access to a new walking route to the Royal St. George's Golf Club, provided the additional capacity required for rail passenger access at The 149th Open Championship, held in July 2021. The project will also ensure that the enhanced station has the capacity required to serve all future major golfing events hosted at Sandwich.

Westenhanger Station: Otterpool Park Garden Town

The District Council is the lead local authority on the development of Westenhanger Station. Kent County Council, as the local transport authority, is inputting to the development plans to help ensure transport impacts of the development are as sustainable as possible by improving the network as necessary. One of these improvements is a proposal to upgrade the station to enable High Speed One services to stop. The station is currently constrained, with limited length platforms and no provision for disabled users. The plans include lengthened platforms, a new footbridge and lifts, and a new station building with ticket office and other facilities, as well as a dedicated station car park.

This new service would require an additional stop on the existing High Speed One service to and from Dover/Ramsgate, which would provide a direct fast service for commuters and leisure passengers travelling between Otterpool Park and London. The new service would likely only commence when an agreed level of dwelling occupation had been achieved at Otterpool Park.

High Speed One service enhancement

KCC has recently engaged in discussions with High Speed One and the East Kent Delivery Board (representing all the District Councils in East Kent, KCC and local businesses) concerning the need to enhance the provision of High Speed capacity and service levels. The working presumption has been a post-pandemic environment, from about 2025 onwards, in which demand for these services has returned to its previous levels and continues to outstrip supply due to the continued growth in housing and population throughout the county.

There are two key elements essential to the delivery of such an enhanced level of service and capacity: first, the need for an increase in High Speed One rolling-stock, the lead-time for which is about four years from approval to delivery; and second, the installation of a new connection between HS1 and the Mainline on the route west of Folkestone West. These two elements would deliver the capacity required to meet the planned growth in demand, and ensure that future growth into the 2030's and beyond would be accommodated by the high speed rail network.

KCC is also inputting to work by the DfT and undertaken by Network Rail to explore the delivery of an enhancement at Ashford, connecting High Speed One to the Marshlink route to Hastings and beyond, which together with the planned uplift in the high speed fleet could enable operation of through high speed services between St Pancras and East Sussex.

Green Infrastructure

Case study: Environmental benefits delivered alongside drainage improvements

George Park, George V Avenue, Margate

Margate has been popular with holidaymakers since the 18th Century due to sunshine and its seaside; however, winter storms do have an impact on the seaside town. There is a difference of 48mm of rainfall between the driest and wettest months and throughout the year temperatures vary by 12.1°C. Climate change is anticipated to bring still wetter winters and hotter drier summers.

Increased rainfall expected in future years will have an impact on the existing drainage infrastructure in all of our communities. This is especially pertinent in Margate which is served by a "combined" sewer system which takes both foul and surface water. In extreme events, it is more likely that these types of sewer systems can be overwhelmed by rainfall.

An earlier study of the Margate area recognised a constraint on the sewerage capacity from a known pinch point under the railway bridge on All Saint's Avenue. This location has been subject to a number of incidences of flooding, with the internal flooding of residential properties occurring in 2012 and 2016 during heavy rainfall. Two locations were identified within the drainage catchment for assessment, George V Avenue and All Saints Avenue, both of which had adjacent parks and open spaces.

Kent County Council's Flood and Water Management team proposed piloting two small projects to remove surface water from combined systems to reduce local flood risk and increase resilience of the drainage network. Infiltration systems in Hartsdown Park adjacent to All Saints Avenue were completed in 2018 but the recent improvements in George Park completed in 2021 are more notable and demonstrate the benefits which can be gained from managing surface water within open space.

The park was landscaped to store surface water collected from the surrounding roads. The water, collected in ponds and swales known as attenuation areas, slowly filters through the planting, removing any pollutants and drains back into the groundwater. Projects like this help to divert water away from the sewer/drainage network and provide an opportunity to ensure that the whole system can cope. The new landscape features and variety of planting will improve the park's overall appearance and encourage wildlife. We shall also be extending the footpath throughout the park to provide better interconnectivity to the surrounding area.

The project was part-funded by the EU Interreg North Seas Region and involved partners from Belgium, Germany, Sweden, The Netherlands and the UK to deliver the Blue Green Infrastructure through Social Innovation project called BEGIN. The project sought solutions which can provide adaptations to urban green space to manage surface water flooding, reduce the impacts of climate change and create attractive spaces with multiple uses. Project partners Isle of Thanet Tree and Woodland Initiative plan to plant up to 50 new trees as part of the overall project.

The George Park project highlights how surface water management can be integrated into open space and provide benefit to the community. As part of the EU Interreg BEGIN project, the wider benefits for the George Park project were assessed using B£ST (Best Estimation Tool – CIRIA 2019) and included benefits for flooding, health, education, water quantity and enabling development. The total benefits accrued an economic benefit of £471,530 which outweighed the net present value of the project at £321,530. It is these wider benefits that provide greater value to the drainage project. The plan shows the layout of the scheme.

The park, owned by Thanet District Council, will see the maintenance of the newly planted areas undertaken by Kent County Council until this planting is fully established when it will revert back to Thanet District Council.

	Type of drainage system	Maximum flood volume reduction	Highway area removed	Volume of surface water storage
George Park	Swales and basin with two soakaways	40m³	5,200m²	961m³
Hartsdown Park	Cellular crates	57m³	3,700m²	42m³

Right: The plan shows the layout of the George V Park, Margate, sustainable drainage scheme.
CREDIT: Kent County Council

Left: Soakaway at the sustainable urban drainage scheme George V Park, Margate.
CREDIT: Kent County Council

George V Park - Margate
Sustainable Drainage Scheme

What is Sustainable Drainage?

Sustainable Drainage schemes (SuDs) are a way of managing surface water flood risk.
At George Park the surface water is managed by using the green spaces to capture water in natural features like swales and ponds and allow it to soak into the ground or be evaporated. This reduces the need for traditional piped drainage networks to be used to manage surface water within the built environment. SuDS can also provide amenity value, reduce the impacts of climate change, and create spaces for nature.

Making space for nature

The grass lined swales will help to improve the water quality by removing pollutants putting clean water back into the environment. The plants within the detention ponds have been chosen to help provide essential food and habitat for local wildlife, seeds and nectar will provide a valuable food source for birds, butterflies, and other insects as well as a place to lay their eggs.

Why do we need sustainable drainage here?

An increased frequency of intense rainfall events, often associated with summer thunderstorms, combined with a drainage network that quickly reaches capacity, has led to more frequent flooding. Excess surface water within this area discharged into the combined sewer causing flooding further along the drainage network. Increasing the capacity of the drainage network was not possible but by allowing surface water, which would normally enter this network, to discharge into the park has helped to reduce the risk of flooding.

How does it work?

Surface water from the surrounding roads enters the swales within the park via road gullies. For small rainfall events the water remains within the swales and filters into the ground. During heavy rain or thunderstorms, water flows from the swales into the detention ponds where it can infiltrate into the ground, two soakaways have been installed within the larger detention pond to help increase the speed that water can infiltrate.

Images: Matt Deavenport (leaf) Shiva Shenoy - (bee)

Interreg North Sea Region BEGIN European Regional Development Fund EUROPEAN UNION

Kent County Council kent.gov.uk

Contributor

cripps pemberton greenish

The highs and lows of property through a pandemic

For this years' report, we interviewed some of our professional property partners to get their view on what has been an extraordinary year for us all.

Guy Hollaway, Hollaway Studios

Q. What trends have you seen in the property market over the last year? How do these translate to Kent?
As people crave more space and fresh air, we are seeing a coastal renaissance. In East Kent, house prices are rising. For the apartments on our Hythe project at Foxwood for Sunningdale Homes, we designed garden terraces. In Margate, we completed Dreamland in 2015 – now we are designing five-star hotels. Folkestone is becoming a destination too with high quality residential builds, for example the Leas Pavilion which we hope to start late 2021 for Gustavia. This shows confidence in the market. I can only see this continuing as people's ability to monetise from home means they gain time back from their commute and invest in their communities. It is vital we keep our connections to London though. Over the pandemic, we have demonstrated how flexible and connected we are between Councils, professional advisers, engineers and contractors working for clients investing in Kent.

Q. What does environmental and social responsibility mean to your practice?
Environmentally architecture should be designed to stand the test of time, to get better as it ages. This is about quality builds. For me, social responsibility is about community and about believing in our places and making them for us, about us and from us. Over the last year, we've increased connectivity in the supply chain working with Kent contractors. This is ultimately more time and cost efficient. We were reminded through lockdown of the value of our beautiful county. There is a new clarity about the spaces we want to inhabit and with a better work/life balance we can enjoy our surroundings.

Q. You've talked about hybrid working. Tell us more about the impact this is having on Kent property?
Employers are getting savvy to hybrid working. Rather than employees travelling to London, I think employers will start coming to them. Ashford is perfectly placed as it is well connected with potential for huge job creation. By linking academia and local skills, we can reverse brain drain from London to the counties. Hybrid working is leading us to invest more in where we live. We want to be able to walk to leisure activities, restaurants, art, culture and sport. Our towns are becoming more diverse and our placemaking needs to respond with more of an 'everyman' experience. For example, Canterbury is re-imagining its heritage by looking to create an open-air theatre in the castle grounds turning day trippers into weekenders. Kent is a connected county with high standards of living. People want to be here and visit. More people are waking up to this.

Q. You're clearly optimistic about the future. What do you see happening in the years ahead?
Kent will go big. I don't simply mean big projects but worthwhile ones. The years ahead are about investing in young people. It's more than about creating good quality homes but creating arts and leisure. The F51 Skate Park in Folkestone is an excellent example. It is a gift to the town and is right in the centre, showing young people they matter. The Times rated it one of the 'top 10 coolest buildings to gawp at in 2021'. You never know – Folkestone may become home to the next Olympic skateboarder.

Alex Hicken, DHA Planning

Q. Please share your views on the market. Where do you see the greatest challenges?
The property market has shown resilience. The greatest challenge is resourcing and a lack of sector skills. This is pertinent in local authorities. They have highly skilled staff but are beyond stretched. This can lead to planning delays that stifle supply. The pandemic has exacerbated this issue. DHA are attracting young talent by working with the University of Kent and Royal Town Planning Institute. We have taken on 8 graduates over the past year and I know local authorities including Canterbury and Medway are looking to "grow their own" via graduate programmes.

Q. Environmental responsibility is a hot topic. How is it changing developments?
Pressure is growing not only from Government but also buyers looking for energy efficient homes and landowners increasingly mindful of their environmental responsibilities. With the introduction of bio-diversity net gain, mitigation is playing a huge role in bringing development forward. There are deeper issues with ground nitrates and phosphates holding up thousands of units, particularly in East Kent. The industry is working hard to find solutions but it is still a significant short term issue.

Q. Where do you see planning policy going in the next few years?
Voters in the Amersham by-election gave a clear indication they were not happy with HS2 and housing development. This sent shockwaves through Downing Street and we suspect last summer's planning white paper will be amended accordingly. Environmental responsibility will continue to increase, especially with carbon neutrality targeted for 2050. The sector needs the right skills to deliver sustainable development.

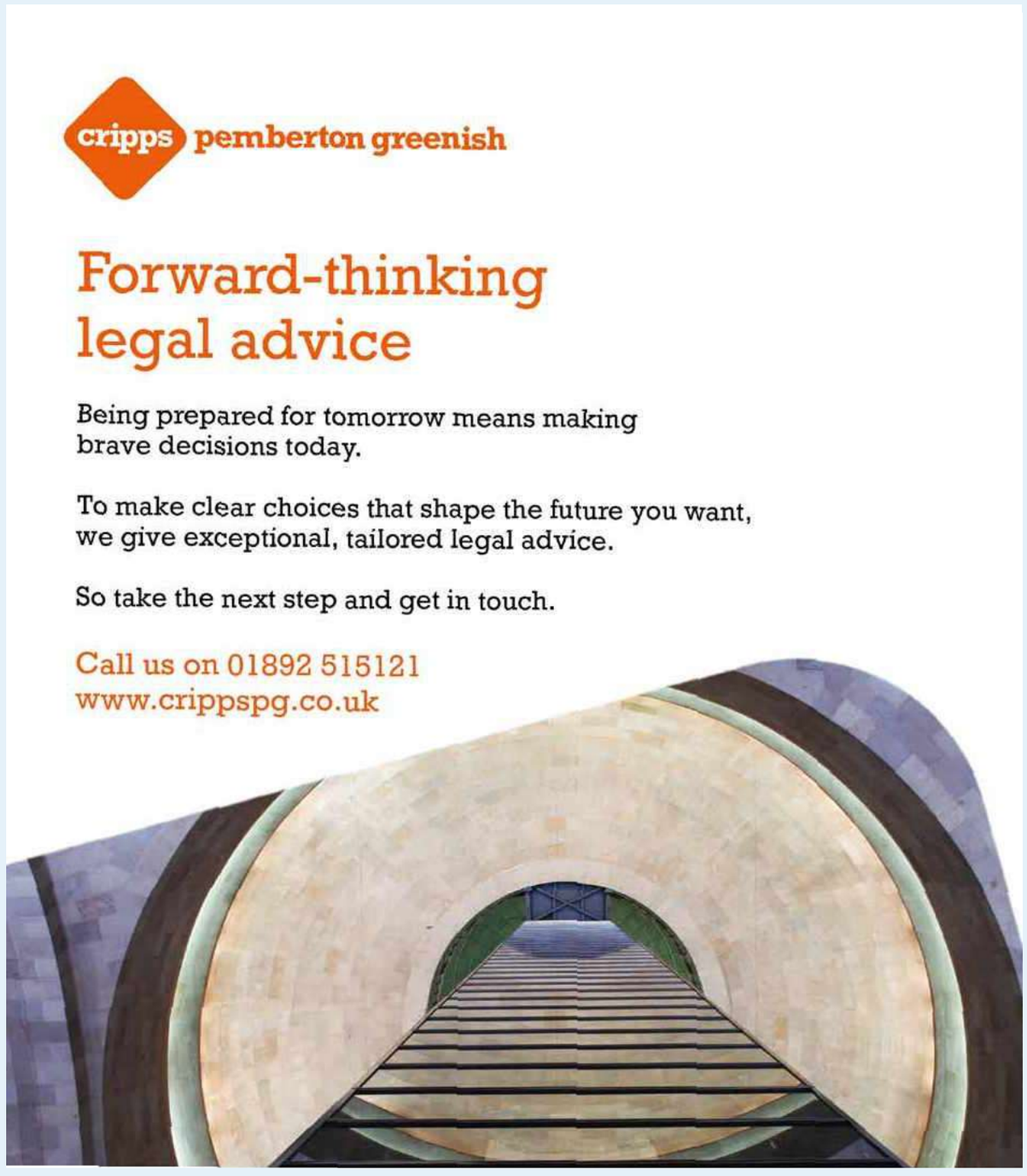
Q. What positives have emerged for you over the year?
We've enjoyed engaging with a more mixed community via our online consultations. Not only are younger people getting involved, people are also being more considered in their responses having direct access to documents and submitting written comments.

Glen Thomas, MHA MacIntrye Hudson

Q. What trends have you seen in the property market over the last year?
The housing market is currently strong. Planning and funding is coming through in places like Medway, Ebbsfleet and the A2 corridor. The missing piece is the supporting infrastructure to make these places accessible. One noticeable thing for me was seeing a new pub opening in Ebbsfleet so something must be going right! Construction has bounced back after last Spring but there are continuing supply issues in both skills and materials. Given the uncertainty, it has been reassuring that the banks have not pulled the rug as they did in 2008. It feels like the property market has stayed robust.

Q. Which areas have you been advising on?
The VAT reverse charge in construction has been in place for the last few months. We are not entirely sure what knock-on effect this might have on cashflow and banking covenants for smaller contractors. So far we've heard nothing negative. MHA MacIntrye Hudson has also been advising on Government support schemes from furlough to business support loans and VAT collection deferrals. This has been a steep learning curve for us and our clients.

Q. Have there been any positives from the pandemic?
We have been reminded how much it counts to be a people business. Getting through the initial crisis, our clients turned to us for advice. It was hard work to quickly work out and interpret the new rules. I'd say we are enjoying closer relationships now which is a huge positive. The pandemic also put a new type of pressure on us all. There was no let-up which left some people struggling to find balance. This year, MHA MacIntyre Hudson is investing more in employee support schemes and has established a well-being group. This is here to stay and I can only see that as a good thing.


cripps pemberton greenish
Forward-thinking legal advice
Being prepared for tomorrow means making brave decisions today.
To make clear choices that shape the future you want, we give exceptional, tailored legal advice.
So take the next step and get in touch.
Call us on 01892 515121
www.crippspg.co.uk

Contributor

Planning is at the heart of Kent's recovery

With attention focused on housing delivery and the future of our town centres and high streets, DHA's team has worked closely with developers and local authorities to help translate their vision into planning reality.

While Local Plans will inevitably be aimed at delivering the big housing numbers demanded by Government, local authorities and investors are also looking at how Kent's retail and office space and public transport can be sustained. As a result, repurposing, renewing and reinvigorating our communities – big and small – is top of the political and economic agenda:

Ashford Infinity

Infinity Ashford, a major residential scheme in the heart of the town, has been given the go-ahead. DHA acted on behalf of A Better Choice for Property Ltd and successfully secured permission for the 16-storey building offering 207 apartments, as well as nine townhouses fronting the River Stour. Designed by Canterbury-based On Architecture, Infinity Ashford also includes three commercial units and a rooftop restaurant. It is located opposite Ashford International Station.

Medway landmark to be repurposed

DHA also secured permission for Medway Development Company to redevelop the landmark 1970s Mountbatten House in Chatham. No longer viable as an office, the 12-storey building will bring forward a minimum of 160 apartments in the heart of the town centre.

With the building's size and relatively good condition, and demolition not viable, the design-led proposals will transform Mountbatten House. A new extension, including a rooftop function space plus an architectural wrap to the old bus station frame and new public realm, will reinforce Chatham's position as Medway's 'town centre'.

Meeting housing need

Across the county, many local authorities are struggling to meet their housing allocations and demonstrate housing land supply. There is the growing realisation that many draft Local Plans will need to consider releasing green belt land for development.

Despite large swathes of green belt and AONB across Kent, DHA's team has delivered a healthy pipeline of planning permissions after successfully demonstrating that each presented 'very special circumstances' – the highest bar to clear in planning terms. Many landowners and developers continue to treat green belt sites with a high degree of caution or pass on them completely. However, despite the challenges of the pandemic, DHA has secured permission for multiple major development proposals in the green belt, with more than half gained under delegated powers.

CREDIT: STONEHOUSE DEVELOPMENTS/DHA

Proposal for Infinity Ashford residential development.

CREDIT: CARLOS DOMINGUEZ PHOTOGRAPHY/ KIER CONSTRUCTION

Springhead Park Primary School, a new two form entry school at Ebbsfleet.

One recent permission is Fidelity International's Oakhill House campus in Hildenborough. Unable to secure a new business tenant, Fidelity worked directly with DHA to demonstrate the only viable option was for residential re-use. Full planning permission, under 'very special circumstances', was secured for Berkeley Homes to convert the existing commercial buildings, including new build homes, to contribute to unmet housing need.

Agricultural conversion

Green belt permissions have not just focused on new homes. DHA secured approval to convert and replace 2,600m^2 (27,986ft^2) of old farm and agricultural buildings for The Hatchery at Preston Farm, Shoreham. The new business seeks to create a high-quality rural business work hub with a community focus – and support the local rural economy.

For further information on DHA's planning services visit www.dhaplanning.co.uk or call 01622 776226.

planning transport design environment infrastructure land

For over 35 years DHA has provided expert Town Planning guidance and advice on all aspects of the planning system, maximising the value and potential of property.

www.dhaplanning.co.uk 01622 776226 info@dhaplanning.co.uk

Contributor

Hollaway

Architects / Master Planners / Interior Designers

Future Trends

We are living in a period of great change, which has been accelerated in this post-pandemic era. The change in human behaviour will dictate how we use buildings in the future. As architects we have a duty to predict and respond to this change. We've taken this opportunity to consider some sectors which will see the greatest change.

As the pandemic limits travel abroad, holidaymakers are re-discovering the value of a break on our own shores. As a result, hotels of the future will become destinations within themselves, rather than simply providing a room to stay in. The 'working break' will swap home working for a destination hotel, an opportunity for a spa retreat, a wellness week, and work in a shared lounge or from the comfort of your own room. Hotels will become membership led, offering opportunities for businesses to come together.

There will be a desire for the future workplace to be somewhere to meet, share ideas and socialise. The workplace will need to innovate and inspire. The hybrid worker is here to stay, adopting workplace flexibility and enabling us to work three days from home, and then in a shared workspace for the remaining two.

The creative industry is one of the largest growing sectors. Art has the ability to bring communities together. Art and Architecture must work together to create and enrich our town centres.

We have a newfound respect for the homegrown products, which are produced locally, sustainably sourced and have a sense of place. We'll become less reliant on foreign imports, in favour of products which contribute to our own circular economy. Our department stores are struggling, and we need to find new ways to re-purpose these critical town centre spaces, providing long term sustainable solutions. This could become the key to rejuvenating our town centres. A draw for leisure and wellbeing, health care centres or even a skatepark or climbing centre. Could we create maker spaces, where the craft industry can flourish, and food halls can celebrate homegrown produce?

We need to better protect our countryside and make the most of the opportunity to reverse climate change through natural re-wilding. The Garden of England status is one of Kent's greatest assets and needs our protection and management. We must find new ways to create recreational pursuits, which at the same time can help to enhance our landscapes, whereby the countryside and public benefit together.

The home will become an all-encompassing place to live, work, relax and play. The house of the future will demand more space, greater technology and be energy plus. Homes that provide defendable quiet places, whilst having the ability to accommodate modern family life. Homes that generate more energy than they consume, through a combination of renewable energy sources and energy saving design solutions. The house of the future must give back, work for the occupants and the wider environment.

It is important that we recognise these changes that are happening and react positively. Here lies the opportunity to create a new way of living and earning, which will ultimately give us a better work/life balance

Guy Hollaway Principal Partner Hollaway
guyhollaway@hollawaystudio.co.uk
www.hollawaystudio.co.uk

CREDIT: HOLLAWAY

Proposal for Leas Pavilion, Folkestone.

Proposal for Nayland Rock Hotel & Spa, Margate.
CREDIT: Hollaway

Contributor

mha
MACINTYRE HUDSON

The impact of the pandemic

The full impact of the pandemic on the construction sector will not truly be known for years to come. Whilst it would seem that the residential sector, in particular, remains robust as demand and prices continue to surge, commentators are concerned that any pandemic bounce back is endangered by a combination of materials shortages, rising materials prices and scarcity of skilled and unskilled labour. Where materials are available logistics businesses are currently unable to deliver them in a timely manner. Even though new orders are up, ONS figures indicated that construction output dropped below pre pandemic levels for 3 consecutive months in the summer.

Pressure is therefore on the industry to be proactive and work together in resolving the above issues and to free up supply to meet demand. Commentators are concerned such external pressures are creating real uncertainty at the moment and that materials and wage inflation is set to continue for the foreseeable future. Whilst such uncertainties are not peculiar to the construction industry, it is unfortunate timing that the government chose to announce the introduction of a Residential Property Developer Tax (RDPT) by issuing a consultation document on 29 April 2021. RDPT will be payable on top of a developer's corporation tax liability and it is known that it will be assessed on relevant profits in excess of £25m on residential property sales or build to rents. At the time of drafting details of the final scheme and how it will operate, including the rate at which it will be assessed, are uncertain. What we do know is that it will apply from 1 April 2022 and will be applicable for the following 10 years. Given that no relief will be available for financing costs it may well bring a lot more businesses into charge than one might suspect.

The government's justification for the introduction of RDPT is to assist in the cost of the Building Safety Package which was announced by the Secretary of State for Housing on 10 February 2021.When more details are available with regard to the rate applicable, means of calculation and timing of the payments, any prudent residential property developer should ensure that their budgeting processes for new projects and those that will straddle the introduction RDPT are amended to cost out this new tax.

However, on a positive note, there is significant scope for companies to improve their cash flow through the use of Research and Development (R&D) tax relief in the sector. It is important to remember that within construction a whole range of costs are potentially eligible as the basis for a claim. R&D need not just relate to the development of brand new ideas or concepts but a range of activities contributing to the continuous evolution of existing technology and practice could well qualify. We would encourage all businesses in the sector to take a close look at what they are doing and speak to their adviser to make absolutely certain that they are not missing out on the possibility of claiming R&D tax relief. MHA Macintyre Hudson understands the nature of the construction industry and the challenges faced. We work with a wide range of clients in the sector.

Glen Thomas
Tax Partner
MHA McIntyre Hudson
03330 100 220
Glen.thomas@mhllp.co.uk

CREDIT: COUNTRYSIDE/ANDREW HENDRY

Rochester Riverside.

CREDIT: STONEHOUSE REGENERATION

Proposal for apartments at Linden Park Road, Tunbridge Wells.

AUDIT • TAX • ADVISORY
Having tomorrow's conversations, today
macintyrehudson.co.uk
Now, for tomorrow
mha
MACINTYRE HUDSON
In a disrupted world where change is the only constant, great relationships are more important than ever. At MHA MacIntyre Hudson, we are passionate about building strong, supportive partnerships that help our financial services clients to achieve sustainable growth.
Let's face the future, together.
An independent member of
bakertilly
INTERNATIONAL

Contributor

Build back better

The outlook for the UK economy remains positive despite current supply chain issues, with the success of the vaccination programme and the gradual easing of the pandemic restrictions supporting activity. The latest estimates suggest the economy will grow by around 7% this year followed by a little over 5% in 2022.

In the residential sector, property prices rose rapidly, driven by a combination of factors including the drop in the cost of money to close to zero, the stamp duty holiday and the desire for more living space with the increased prevalence of home working. The RICS UK Residential Survey from August suggests that after some very strong sales numbers there are indications that new buyer demand has begun to ease.

That said, while the closing of the stamp duty holiday was widely expected to have some dampening effect on the housing market, previous experience indicates that any drop in transactions will be short-lived before the picture stabilises. Meanwhile higher prices are likely to continue to be underpinned by the demand supply imbalance.

In the commercial property market, occupier demand for retail space continues to fall. However, the latest RICS UK Commercial Property Survey show the office picture has begun to settle down particularly for prime space while industrial demand remains very strong. The results also show that close to two-thirds of survey respondents now believe market conditions are consistent with an upturn, compared with 36% of respondents in the early part of the year. This is reflected in the somewhat more positive trend in investor appetite that is gradually beginning to emerge.

As individuals and businesses continue to adapt to the realities of the pandemic, it's important that the opportunities to build back better from the pandemic are not lost within the built environment. To support the green agenda, RICS believes that a key focus for governments and elected representatives now should be on the creation of affordable, low-carbon homes across all tenures while championing the retrofitting of housing, high streets and urban town centres.

As the UK prepares to host the COP26 climate summit in November, there is a prime opportunity to ensure that sustainability is at the heart of future decisions we make about the built environment, and that planning and development decisions increasingly prioritise economic, social and environmental wellbeing.

Bradley Tully
Senior Public Affairs Officer – England

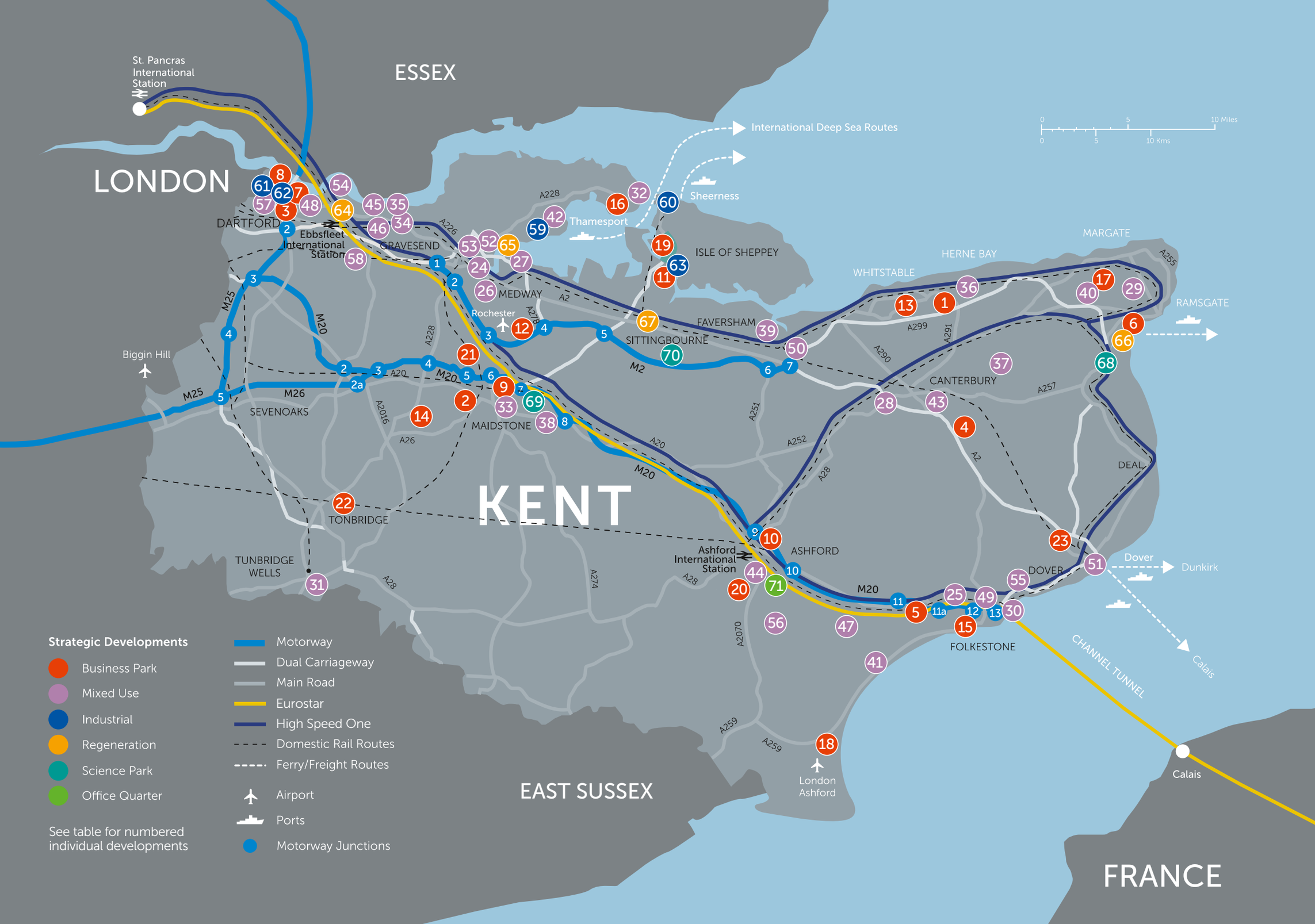
CREDIT: ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Proposal for Riverside Park, Ashford.

CREDIT: HOLLAWAY

Proposal for St Mary Bredin, Canterbury.

Opposite: Kent and Medway Medical School campus, Canterbury.
CREDIT: HMY Architects


St. Pancras International Station
ESSEX
LONDON
International Deep Sea Routes
Sheerness
Thamesport
ISLE OF SHEPPEY
MARGATE
HERNE BAY
WHITSTABLE
RAMSGATE
DARTFORD
Ebbsfleet International Station
GRAVESEND
MEDWAY
Rochester
FAVERSHAM
SITTINGBOURNE
Biggin Hill
M25
M20
M26
M2
A2
A20
A228
A226
A278
A299
A291
A290
A257
A251
A252
A28
A274
A2070
A259
A26
A2016
SEVENOAKS
MAIDSTONE
CANTERBURY
DEAL
TONBRIDGE
TUNBRIDGE WELLS
KENT
Ashford International Station
ASHFORD
DOVER
Dover
Dunkirk
Calais
CHANNEL TUNNEL
FOLKESTONE
London Ashford
EAST SUSSEX
FRANCE
0 5 10 Miles
0 5 10 Kms
Strategic Developments
Business Park
Mixed Use
Industrial
Regeneration
Science Park
Office Quarter
See table for numbered individual developments
Motorway
Dual Carriageway
Main Road
Eurostar
High Speed One
Domestic Rail Routes
Ferry/Freight Routes
Airport
Ports
Motorway Junctions

Strategic Developments

Key and usage codes for strategic developments:

- Business Parks
- Mixed Use
- Industrial
- Regeneration
- Science Park
- Office Quarter

A1 Shops & retail
B1 Offices, light industry
B2 General industrial
B8 Warehouses, distribution
C1 Hotels

D1 Education, crèches
D2 Leisure
R Residential
Sui Generis Petrol station, car showroom

Map no.	Scheme	Location	Usage	Contact	Website
1	Altira Business Park	Herne Bay	B1, B2, B8	Sinclair Clark, 020 7494 9399/Core Commercial, 01892 834483/ Terrace Hill Urban & Civic, 020 7509 5555	altirapark.com
2	Advanced Technology Horticultural Zone	East Malling	B R&D	NIAB EMR 01732 843833	emt-planningforthefuture.co.uk
3	The Bridge	Dartford	B1, B8	JLL, 01322 629230/Prologis 0121 2248700	thebridgedartford.co.uk
4	Canterbury Business Park/Highland Court	Canterbury	B1, B8	Quinn Estates, 01227 831212	quinn-estates.com
5	Cheriton Parc	Folkestone	B1	Motis Estates, 01303 212020	Motis-estates.com
6	China Gateway International	Ramsgate	B1,B2, B8, Sui Generis	Locate in Kent 01732 520700	–
7	Crossways	Dartford	B1	Caxtons – 01474 537733/Watson Day – 01634 668000/ Altus Group – 01322 285 588	crosswayskent.com
8	Crossways Commercial Park	Dartford	B8	Goodmans 020 3426 0800	uk.goodman.com/properties-for-lease
9	Eclipse Business Park	Maidstone	A1, B1, C1	Gallagher Group, 01622 716543/Sibley Pares, 01622 673086	eclipsepark.co.uk
10	Eureka Business Park	Ashford	B1	Martine Waghorn, 01622 672233	–
11	G Park Sittingbourne	Sittingbourne	B1, B8	Savills 020 7499 8644	gpark-sittingbourne.com
12	Innovation Park Medway	Rochester	B1, B2, B8	Locate in Kent 01732 520700	medway.gov.uk/business
13	Joseph Wilson Industrial Estate Extension	Whitstable	B1	George Wilson Developments, 01227 263077	georgewilsonholdings.com
14	Kings Hill	West Malling	A1, B1, D2, R	Liberty Property Trust UK, 01732 223426/Altus Edwin Hill, 01322 285588/ Knight Frank, 020 7629 8171/Hanover Green, 020 3130 6400	kings-hill.com
15	Link Park	Lympne	B1, B2, B8	Core Commercial, 01892 834483	–
16	London Thamesport	Rochester	B1, B2, B8 Sui Generis	Hutchison Ports, 01634 271511	londonthamesport.co.uk
17	Manston Business Park	Ramsgate	B1, B2, B8	East Kent Opportunities, 01622 221380/Savills, 01732 789716	–
18	Mountfield Road Industrial Estate	New Romney	B1, B2, B8	Folkestone and Hythe Council 01303 853000	folkestone.works
19	Neats Court	Isle of Sheppey	B1, B2, B8, Ancillary	Savills 020 7499 8644	–
20	Orbital Park	Ashford	B1, B2, B8 Trade	Altus Group, 01322 285588/BNP Paribas Real Estate, 020 7629 7282	orbitalpark.co.uk
21	Panattoni Park	Aylesford	B1, B2, B8	JLL 020 7493 4933	–
22	Tonbridge Trade Park	Tonbridge	B8	Chancerygate 07823 330853	tonbridgetradepark.co.uk
23	White Cliffs Business Park	Dover	B1, B2, B8	Citycourt 01799 528600	citycourtdevelopments.co.uk
24	Bardell Wharf	Rochester	A1-A5, B1-B2, D1-D2, Sui Generis	Quinn Estates, 01622 684407	www.quinn-estates.com
25	Biggins Wood	Folkestone	Mixed Use	Folkestone and Hythe Council 01303 853000	folkestone.works
26	Chatham Centre and Waterfront	Chatham	A5, C1, C3	Medway Council, 01634 333333	medway.gov.uk/business
27	Chatham Maritime	Chatham	B1, C1, C3	Chatham Maritime Trust, 01634 891888	cmtrust.co.uk
28	Cockering Farm/Thanington Park	Canterbury	Mixed Use, B1	Quinn Estates, 01227 831212	quinn-estates.com
29	EuroKent Business Park	Ramsgate	A1, B1, B2, B8, D2	Rosefarm Estates plc, 01243 785151	–
30	Folkestone Harbour	Folkestone	Mixed Use	Folkestone Harbour Company, 01303 254597	folkestoneseafront.com

Map no.	Scheme	Location	Usage	Contact	Website
31	Former Cinema Site/Belvedere	Tunbridge Wells	Mixed Use	Elysian Residences 020 7004 1773	elysiantunbridgewells.com
32	Former Grain Power Station	Hoo	Mixed use	Uniper 0121 329 4350	–
33	Former Royal Mail Sorting Office	Maidstone	Mixed Use	Caxtons, 01474 615615	–
34	Gravesend Regeneration	Gravesend	Mixed Use	Reef 020 7637 0601	–
35	Gravesend Riverside	Gravesend	Mixed Use	Joseph Homes 020 7499	–
36	Herne Bay Commercial Quarter	Herne Bay	B1	Quinn Estates, 01227 831 212	quinn-estates.com
37	Hoplands Farm	Canterbury	Mixed Use, B1	Quinn Estates, 01227 831212	quinn-estates.com
38	Loc8	Hollingbourne	Mixed Use	Clearbell 020 7494 7620	clearbell.com
39	Love Lane	Faversham	Mixed use	Vinson Trust	–
40	Manston Airport	Manston Airport	Mixed use	RiverOak Ltd	rsp.co.uk
41	Martello Lakes	Hythe	Mixed Use	Barratt Homes, 0844 8549936	barratthomes.co.uk
42	Medway One	Hoo	Mixed use	Uniper 0121 329 4350	–
43	Mountfield Park	Canterbury	Mixed Use, B1	Corinthian Land	mountfieldpark.co.uk
44	Newtown Works	Ashford	Mixed Use	Quinn Estates 01227 831212	quinn-estates.com
45	Northfleet Embankment East	Gravesham	B1, B2	Gravesham Borough Council, 01474 337 258/Homes England	ebbsfleetdc.org.uk
46	Northfleet Embankment West	Gravesham	B1, B2, B8, R	David Lock Associates 01908 666276/EDC 0303 444 8831/GBC 01474 337258	ebbslfeetdc.org.uk
47	Otterpool Park	Folkestone	Mixed Use	Folkestone and Hythe Council 01303 853000	ottepoolpark.org
48	Panorama Crossways	Dartford	B1c, B2, B8	Altus Group, 01322 285588, Knight Frank, 020 7861 1550	chancerygate.com
49	Park Farm	Folkestone	Mixed Use	Q+A Planning, 020 3542 2241	–
50	Perry Court	Faversham	Mixed Use	Hallam Land Management, 0114 255 5444	perry-court.co.uk
51	Port of Dover	Dover	Mixed Use	Dover Harbour Board, 01304 240400	doverport.co.uk/dwdr
52	Rochester Riverside	Rochester	A1-A5, B1-B2, C1, D1-D2, Sui Generis	Countryside, 01634 776506	countrysideproperties.com
53	Strood Waterfront	Rochester	A1-A4, C1-C3,B1	Medway Council 01634 333333	medway.gov.uk/business
54	Swanscombe Peninsula	Dartford/Gravesham	B1,D1,D2,R	David Lock Associates 01908 666276/EDC 0303 444 8831/DBC 01322 343434	ebbsfleetdc.org.uk
55	Terlingham Gardens	Hawkinge	Mixed Use	Pentland Homes, 01303 864 590	pentlandhomes.co.uk
56	Waterbrook Park	Ashford	B1, B2, B8, Sui Generis	GSE Group, 01233 501301/Sibley Pares, 01622 673086/ Knight Frank, 020 7629 8171	waterbrookpark.co.uk
57	Westgate Quarter	Dartford	Mixed Use	Muse 020 3929 0300	–
58	Whitecliffe (Eastern Quarry)	Dartford	A1,B1,C1,D1, R	Henley Camland 01483 617070	henleycamland.com
59	London Medway Commercial Park	Rochester	B1, B2, B8 Sui Generis	Goodman UK Logistics, 0121 506 8100/CBRE, 020 7182 2000/ Colliers International, 020 7344 6730/Caxtons, 01474 567666	londonmedwaycp.com
60	Port of Sheerness	Isle of Sheppey	B1, B2, B8	Peel Ports, 01795 596596	peelports.com
61	Powerhouse	Dartford	B8	Bericote 020 7409 1544	thepowerhouse.london
62	Rennie Drive	Dartford	B8	Cushman and Wakefield Call 020 8033 7334	–
63	Ridham Dock	Sittingbourne	B1, B2, B8 Sui Generis	Caxtons 01474 567666	–
64	Ebbsfleet Central	Ebbsfleet	A1, B1, C1, D1, D2, R	EDC 0303 444 8831	ebbsfleetvalley.co.uk
65	Chatham Waters	Chatham	A1-A5, B1-B2, C1, D1-D2, Sui Generis	Peel Ports, 01795 596596	chathamwaters.co.uk
66	Port of Ramsgate	Ramsgate	B1,B2, B8, Sui Generis	Thanet District Council 01843 577000	–
67	Sittingbourne Town Centre	Sittingbourne	Mixed use	Swale Borough Council, U+I Group Plc, Quinn Estates and Essential Land 01227 831212	spiritofsittingbourne.com
68	Discovery Park	Sandwich	B1, B2, B8	Discovery Park Ltd, 01304 614060	discovery-park.co.uk
69	Kent Medical Campus	Maidstone	A1, B1, C2, D1	Torrinum 01908 660177	kentmedicalcampus.com
70	Kent Science Park	Sittingbourne	B1	Kent Science Park, 01795 411500	kentsciencepark.com
71	Commercial Quarter	Ashford	B1a	Quinn Estates, 01227 831212/George Wilson Developments, 01227 263077/ Altus Group, 01322 285588	–

Contacts

Written and compiled by:

Kent County Council

For further advice, assistance and information on development opportunities, contact:

Nigel Smith, Head of Development Investment
Kent County Council, Invicta House,
Maidstone ME14 1XX
Tel: +44 03000 412438
Email: reinfo@kent.gov.uk
www.kent.gov.uk

Caxtons

Caxtons Chartered Surveyors, established in 1990, is one of the largest independent property practices in the South East offering a full range of agency, management, professional and surveying services across all property sectors.

Neil Chatterton, Managing Director
Head Office:
James Pilcher House,
49/50 Windmill Street,
Gravesend DA12 1BG
Tel: 01474 537733

26 Hollingworth Court,
Turkey Mill, Ashford Road,
Maidstone ME14 5PP
Tel: 01622 234886

Email: info.office@caxtons.com
Web: www.caxtons.com

Locate in Kent Ltd

As the single point of contact for all companies looking to set up, expand or relocate in Kent and Medway, Locate in Kent provides a comprehensive, confidential and free business relocation and expansion advisory service.

Gavin Cleary, Chief Executive
First Floor, International House,
Dover Place, Ashford TN23 1HU
Tel: +44 (0)1732 520 700
Email: enquiries@locateinkent.com
www.locateinkent.com

Contributors:

Cripps Pemberton Greenish

Cripps Pemberton Greenish is a leading law firm for real estate businesses, corporate clients and private individuals. With offices in Kent and London, we offer a flexible team of 420 people and we equip and continuously strengthen our teams by investing in the best talent and technology. By making 'how we do' as important as 'what we do' Cripps Pemberton Greenish has built a unique culture and capability designed around your needs.

Stephen Hedley, Head of Real Estate
Cripps Pemberton Greenish
Number 22, Mount Ephraim,
Tunbridge Wells TN4 8AS
Tel: +44 (0)1892 506 200
Email: stephen.hedley@crippspg.co.uk
www.crippspg.co.uk

DHA

DHA is a creative team of professional Town Planners, Highways, Infrastructure, Design, Environmental and Land Consultants working from offices in Maidstone and Crawley. We provide a comprehensive and integrated service to some of the UKs largest landowners and developers in both the private and public sector throughout the UK.

Alex Hicken, Managing Director DHA
Eclipse House, Eclipse Park,
Maidstone, Kent ME14 3EN
Tel: 01622 776226
www.dhaplanning.co.uk
Email: info@dhaplanning.co.uk

Hollaway

Hollaway Studio is an RIBA award winning practice of architects, master-planners and interior designers working from studios based both in Kent and London. Hollaway Studio has highly motivated creative architects and designers working in a variety of sectors, from large scale mixed-use regeneration proposals through to smaller bespoke design focused projects.

Guy Hollaway; Principal Partner,
Alex Richards; Partner,
The Tramway Stables
Rampart Road
Hythe CT21 5BG
Tel: 01303 260 515

10A Acton Street
London, W1X 9NG
Tel: 020 7096 5425

www.hollawaystudio.co.uk

MacIntyre Hudson

MHA MacIntyre Hudson is a national Top 15 chartered accountancy and business advisory firm with offices in Canterbury and Maidstone. Our Kent team offers a comprehensive range of services including tax, audit, business strategy, corporate finance and business recovery to owner-managed businesses, multinationals and high net worth individuals across the South East.

Glen Thomas, Head of Construction and Real Estate Kent
MacIntyre Hudson
71 New Dover Road
Canterbury CT1 3DZ
Tel: 03330 100 220

MacIntyre Hudson
Victoria Court
17-21 Ashford Road
Maidstone ME14 5DA
Tel: 03330 100 221

Email: Glen.thomas@mhllp.co.uk
www.macintyrehudson.co.uk

Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors

The leading professional body on all aspects of real estate, property, construction and associated environmental issues.

Bradley Tully
Senior Public Affairs Officer – England
Email: btully@rics.org
Tel: 07976 749208
www.rics.org

Acknowledgements

The compilers of this report are grateful for the assistance, information and data provided by the following organisations in London and Kent:

Altus Group
Avison Young
Barton Wilmore
Bericote Properties
Bluewater
CBRE
Clague
Colliers International
Cradick Retail
Cripps Pemberton Greenish
Cushman Wakefield
DHA
Discovery Park
DTRE
Durlings
Ebbsfleet Development Corporation
George Wilson Holdings Ltd
Goodman
Hanover Green
Hollaway
Harrisons Chartered Surveyors
HMY Architects
Investment Property Forum
JLL
Kent Coworking Collective
Kent Developers group
Kent Housing Development Group
Kent Science Park
Knight Frank
Liberty Property Trust UK Ltd
Local Data Company
Martine Waghorn
MHA Macintyre Hudson
MUSE
Pillory Barn
Quinn Estates Ltd
RICS
RPC Land and New Homes
Rosefarm Estates Plc
Salisbury and Co
Savills
Sibley Pares
Stafford-Perkins
Tavis House/Barwood Capital
Tritax
Uniper
Visit Kent Ltd
Zoopla

Kent District Councils:
Ashford, Canterbury, Dartford, Dover, Gravesham, Maidstone, Medway Council, Sevenoaks, Shepway, Swale, Thanet, Tonbridge & Malling and Tunbridge Wells.

We also thank: Cripps Pemberton Greenish, DHA, Hollaway, MHA MacIntyre Hudson, RICS, and Savills for their support and contributions to this year's report.

This report has been carefully prepared. However it is intended for general guidance only and neither Caxtons, Kent County Council, Locate in Kent nor Cripps Pemberton Greenish, DHA, Hollaway, MHA MacIntyre Hudson, RICS or Savills, can guarantee that there are no errors or omissions. The information, forecasts and opinions set out herein should not be relied on to replace professional advice on specific matters.

No part of this report should be published, reproduced or referred to without prior permission of Kent County Council.

Printed by Impress Print Services
www.impressprint.co.uk
Printed on 350gsm and 200gsm Claro Silk FSC Mix Credit certified paper from responsible sources.

Designed by pgreenwood.co.uk

Copyright ©Kent County Council 2021

Opposite: Hampton by Hilton Ashford International hotel.
CREDIT: Hampton by Hilton

Back cover: Southborough Hub.
CREDIT: Gordon Young, HMY Architects

CREDIT: CLAGUE ARCHITECTS

New premises for Age UK in Herne Bay.

Hampton
Hampton

KENTPROPERTYMARKET.COM

caxtons Chartered Surveyors

Locate in Kent

Kent County Council kent.gov.uk

cripps pemberton greenish

dha

RICS

Hollaway

mha MACINTYRE HUDSON